

Sumitra Ghose

# DAVID COPPERFIELD

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## CHAPTER I

I was born at Blunderstone, in Suffolk, in a house called the Rookery. I was a posthumous child. My father's eyes had closed upon the light of this world six months when mine opened on it.

An aunt of my father's, and consequently a great-aunt of mine, was the principal magnate of our family. Miss Trotwood, or Miss Betsey, as my poor mother always called her, when she sufficiently overcame her dread of this formidable personage to mention her at all (which was seldom), had been married to a husband younger than herself. He was strongly suspected of having beaten Miss Betsey, and even of having once made some hasty but determined arrangements to throw her out of a two pair of stairs' window. These evidences of an incompatibility of temper induced Miss Betsey to pay him off, and effect a separation by mutual consent. Immediately upon the separation she took her maiden name again, bought a cottage in a hamlet on the sea-coast a long way off, established herself there as a single woman with one servant, and was understood to live secluded, ever afterwards, in an inflexible retirement.

My father had once been a favourite of hers, I believe; but she was mortally affronted by his marriage, on the ground that my mother was "a wax doll." She had not seen my mother, but she knew her to be not yet twenty. My father and Miss Betsey never met again. He was double my mother's age when he married, and of a delicate constitution. He died a year afterwards, and, as I have said, six months before I came into the world.

Miss Betsey came to see my mother just before her first confinement, and very kindly offered to adopt the child she was expecting. Miss Betsey had hoped that it would be a girl, and as soon as she was informed that my mother had given birth to a boy, she left our house in a huff, and never came back.

The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty with no shape at all.

There comes, out of the cloud, our house. On the ground-floor is Peggotty's kitchen, opening into a back yard; with a pigeon-house on a pole, in the centre, without any pigeons in it; a great dog-kennel in a corner, without any dog; and a quantity of fowls that look terribly-tall to me, walking about in a menacing and ferocious manner.

Here is a long passage—what an enormous perspective I make of it!—leading from Peggotty's kitchen to the front door. A dark store-room opens out of it. Then there are the two parlours; the parlour in which we sit of an evening, my mother and I and Peggotty—for Peggotty is quite our companion, when her work is done and we are alone—and the best parlour where we sit on a Sunday; grandly, but not so comfortably.

And now I see the outside of our house, with the latticed bedroom windows standing open to let in the sweet-smelling air, and the ragged old rooks' nests dangling in the elm-tree at the bottom of the front garden.

That is among my earliest impressions.

Peggotty and I were sitting one night by the parlour fire, alone. I had been reading to Peggotty about crocodiles. When we had exhausted the crocodiles, and begun with the alligators, the garden-bell rang. We went out to the door; and there was my mother, and with her a gentleman with beautiful black hair and whiskers, who had walked home with us from church last Sunday.

He patted me on the head; but somehow, I didn't like

him or his deep voice, and I was jealous that his hand should touch my mother's in touching me—which it did. I put it away as well as I could.

Whether it was the following Sunday when I saw the gentleman again, or whether there was any greater lapse of time before he re-appeared, I cannot recall.

Gradually, I became used to seeing the gentleman with the black whiskers whose name, I learnt, was Mr. Edward Murdstone. I liked him no better than at first, and had the same uneasy jealousy of him.

I was sitting quietly one evening (when my mother was out) with Peggotty, when she, after looking at me several times, said coaxingly:

"Master Davy, how should you like to go along with me and spend a fortnight at my brother's at Yarmouth? Wouldn't that be a treat?"

"Is your brother an agreeable man, Peggotty?" I inquired, provisionally.

"Oh, what an agreeable man he is!" cried Peggotty, holding up her hands. "Then there's the sea; and the boats and ships; and the fishermen; and the beach; and Am to play with——"

Peggotty meant her nephew Ham.

I was flushed by her summary of delights, and replied that it would indeed be a treat, but what would my mother say?

"Why then I'll as good as bet a guinea," said Peggotty, intent upon my face, "that she'll let us go. I'll ask her, if you like, as soon as ever she comes home. There now!"

"But what's she to do while we are away?" said I, putting my small elbows on the table to argue the point. "She can't live by herself."

"Oh bless you!" said Peggotty, looking at me again. "Don't you know? She's going to stay for a fortnight with Mrs. Grayper. Mrs. Grayper's going to have a lot of company."

Oh! If that was it, I was quite ready to go. I waited, in the utmost impatience, until my mother came home from Mrs. Grayper's (for it was that identical neighbour), to ascertain if we could get leave to carry out this great idea. Without being nearly so much surprised as I expected, my mother entered into it readily; and it was all arranged that night, and my board and lodging during the visit were to be paid for.

The day soon came for our going. We were to go in a carrier's cart, which departed in the morning after breakfast.

I am glad to recollect that when the carrier began to move, my mother ran out at the gate, and called to him to stop, that she might kiss me.

As we left her standing in the road, Mr. Murdstone came up to where she was, and seemed to expostulate with her for being so moved.

## CHAPTER II

We made so many deviations up and down lanes, that I was quite tired, and very glad, when we saw Yarmouth. It looked rather spongy and soppy, I thought, as I carried my eye over the great dull waste that lay across the river.

We got into the street (which was strange enough to me), and smelt the fish, and pitch, and oakum, and tar, and saw the sailors walking about, and the carts jingling up and down over the stones.

"Here's my Am!" screamed Peggotty, "grewed out of knowledge!"

He was waiting for us, in fact, at the public-house—a huge, strong fellow of six feet high, broad in proportion, and round-shouldered; but with a simpering boy's face and curly light hair that gave him quite a sheepish look. He was dressed in a canvas jacket, and a pair of very stiff trousers.

Ham carrying me on his back and a small box of ours

under his arm, and Peggotty carrying another small box of ours, we turned down lanes bestrewn with bits of chips and little hillocks of sand, and went past gas-works, rope-walks, boat-builders' yards, ship-wrights' yards, ship-breakers' yards, caulkers' yards, riggers' lofts, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon the dull waste I had already seen at a distance when Ham said:

"Yon's our house, Mas'r Davy!"

I looked in all directions, as far as I could stare over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could I make out. There was a black barge, or some other kind of super-annuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney and smoking very cosily; but nothing else in the way of a habitation that was visible to me.

"That's not it?" said I. "That ship-looking thing?"

"That's it, Mas'r Davy," returned Ham.

✓ (If it had been Aladdin's palace, roc's egg and all, I suppose I could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it.) There was a delightful door cut in the side, and it was roofed in, and there were little windows in it; (but the wonderful charm of it was, that it was a real boat which had no doubt been upon the water hundreds of times, and which had never been intended to be lived in, on dry land.)

It was beautifully clean inside, and as tidy as possible. There was a table, and a Dutch clock, and a chest of drawers, and on the chest of drawers there was a tea-tray with a painting on it. There were some hooks in the beams of the ceiling, the use of which I did not divine then; and some lockers and boxes and conveniences of that sort, which served for seats and eked out the chairs.

✓ All this I saw in the first glance after I crossed the threshold, and then Peggotty opened a little door and showed me my bedroom. It was the completest and most desirable bedroom ever seen—in the stern of the vessel; with a little

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window, where the rudder used to go through; a little looking-glass, just the right height for me, nailed against the wall, and framed with oyster-shells; a little bed, which there was just room enough to get into; and a nosegay of seaweed in a blue mug on the table. The walls were whitewashed as white as milk, and the patchwork counterpane made my eyes quite ache with its brightness.

We were welcomed by a very civil woman (Mrs. Gummidge) in a white apron, whom I had seen curtsying at the door when I was on Ham's back, about a quarter of a mile off. Likewise by a most beautiful little girl (Emily), with a necklace of blue beads on, who ran away and hid herself. By and by, when we had dined in a sumptuous manner off boiled dabs, melted butter, and potatoes, with a chop for me, a hairy man with a very good-natured face came home. As he called Peggotty "Lass," and gave her a hearty smack on the cheek, I had no doubt he was her brother, and so he turned out—being presently introduced to me as Mr. Peggotty, the master of the house.

"Glad to see you, sir," said Mr. Peggotty. "(You'll find us rough, sir, but you'll find us ready.)"

I thanked him, and replied that I was sure I should be happy in such a delightful place.

After tea, when the door was shut and all was made snug (the nights being cold and misty now), it seemed to me the most delicious retreat that the imagination of man could conceive.

Peggotty informed me that Ham and Emily were an orphan nephew and niece, whom my host had at different times adopted in their childhood, when they were left destitute; and that Mrs. Gummidge was the widow of his partner in a boat, who had died very poor. He was but a poor bachelor himself, said Peggotty, (but as good as gold and as true as steel—those were her similes.)

I was very sensible of my entertainer's goodness, and listened to the women's going to bed in another little crib like

mine at the opposite end of the boat, and to him and Ham hanging up two hammocks for themselves on the hooks I had noticed in the roof, in a very luxurious state of mind, enhanced by my being sleepy. As slumber gradually stole upon me, I heard the wind howling out at sea and coming on across the flat so fiercely, that I had a lazy apprehension of the great deep rising in the night.)

Almost as soon as the morning shone upon the oyster-shell frame of my mirror I was out of bed, and out with little Em'ly, picking up stones upon the beach.

(So the fortnight slipped away.)

At last the day came for going home. I bore up against the separation from Mr. Peggotty and Mrs. Gummidge, but my agony of mind at leaving little Em'ly was piercing. We went arm-in-arm to the public-house where the carrier put up, and I promised, on the road, to write to her.

### CHAPTER III

Now, all the time I had been on my visit, I had been ungrateful to my home and had thought little or nothing about it. (But I no sooner turned towards it, than my reproachful young conscience seemed to point that way with a steady finger; and I felt, all the more for the sinking of my spirits, that it was my nest, and that my mother was my comforter and friend.)

This gained upon me as we went along; so that the nearer we drew, and the more familiar the objects became that we passed, the more excited I was to get there, and to run into her arms. But Peggotty, instead of sharing in these transports, tried to check them (though very kindly), and looked confused and out of sorts.

Blunderstone Rookery would come, however, in spite of her.

The door opened, and I looked half laughing and half crying in my pleasant agitation, for my mother. It was not she, but a strange servant.

"Wax I forgot?" I said. "Isn't she come home?"

"Yes, yes, Master Davy," said Peggotty. "She's come home. Wait a bit, Master Davy, and I'll—I'll tell you something."

When she had got down, she took me by the hand, led me wondering into the kitchen, and shut the door.

"I forgot?" said I, quite frightened. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing, the matter, please you, Master Davy, dear!" she answered, smiling an air of apprehension.

"You see, dear, I should have told you before now," said Peggotty. "But I hadn't an opportunity. I ought to have made it, perhaps, but I didn't, and that was always the mistake for exactly, in Peggotty's train of words, bring my mind to it."

So on Peggotty, and I, more frightened than before.

"Master Davy," said Peggotty, untying her bonnet with a shaking hand, and speaking in a breathless sort of way. "What do you think? You have got a Pa'?"

I trembled, and turned white. (Something, I don't know what, or how, connected with the grave in the churchyard, and the raising of the dead, seemed to strike me like an unwholesome wind.)

"A new one," said Peggotty.

"A new one?" I repeated.

Peggotty gave a gasp, as if she were swallowing something that was very hard, and, putting out her hand, said

"Come and see him."

"I don't want to see him."

"—And your mama," said Peggotty.

I ceased to draw back, and we went straight to the best parlour, where she left me. On one side of the fire, sat my mother, on the other Mr. Murdstone. My mother dropped her work, and arose hurriedly, but timidly, I thought.

"Now Clara my dear," said Mr. Murdstone, "be-  
 come yourself always, become yourself!" Davy boy, how do  
 you do?"

I gave him my hand. After a moment of suspense, I  
 went and kissed my mother. She kissed me, patted me gently  
 on the shoulder, and sat down again to her work. I could not  
 look at her. I could not look at him. I knew quite well that he  
 was looking at us both, and I turned to the window and looked  
 out there at some stars that were dropping their tears in the  
 cold.

As soon as I could creep away, I crept upstairs.

If the room to which my bed was removed were a silent  
 thing that could give evidence, I might appeal to it this day  
 to bear witness for me what a heavy heart I carried to it. I  
 went up there, sat down with my small head crossed, and  
 thought.

I thought of the oddest things. Of the shape of the room,  
 of the rake in the ceiling of the paper on the wall of the  
 flower in the window glass making ripples in the paper on the  
 prospect of the washing stand hanging on its three legs  
 and having a disconcerted something about it. I was crying  
 all the time, and I rolled myself up in a corner of the counter-  
 pane and cried myself to sleep.

I was awakened by somebody saying, "Here he is!" and  
 uncovering my hot head. My mother and Peggotty had come  
 to look for me, and it was one of them who had done it.

"Davy," said my mother, "What a the matter."

I thought it was very strange that she should ask me, and  
 answered, "Nothing." I turned over on my face. I recollect  
 to hide my trembling lip, which answered her with greater  
 truth.

"Davy," said my mother, "Davy, my child!"

I dare say no words she could have uttered would have  
 affected me so much, then, as her calling me her child. I had



"Another? If I have an estate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?"

"I don't know."

"I beat him."

I had answered in a kind of breathless whisper, but I felt, in my voice, that my breath was better now.

I made him wait a moment, and then I said to myself, "I don't know that fellow, and if it were to cut him and too good a deal, I should do it. What is that upon your face?"

"Dirt," I said.

He knew it was the mark of being as well as I. But if he had asked the question twenty times each time with twenty blows, I believe my body heart would have been before I would have told him so.

You have a good deal of dirt on your face, the fellow he said. Wash that face, or and and and with me.

He pointed to the wash-stand and motioned me with his hand to obey him directly.

"Come, my dear," he said when I had done so, and he walked me into the room where he had seen me. "You will not be made in one of our own houses. I am sure we shall soon improve our youthful friends."

We stood alone, we three together. I gathered from what he said, that an elder sister of his was coming to stay with us, and that she was expected that evening. I am not certain whether I found out then or afterwards, but without being actively concerned in any business, he had some share in, or some annual charge upon the profits of a wine-merchant's house in London with which his family had been connected from a great grandfather's time, and in which his sister had some interest.

#### CHAPTER IV

After dinner, when we were sitting at the fire and I was meditating on the case of Peggotty without having the hardihood

coach drove up to the garden gate, and Mr. Murdstone went out to receive the visitor. My mother followed him. I was timidly following her when she turned round at the parlour-door in the dusk, and taking me in her arms as she had been used to do, whispered me to love my new father and be obedient to him.

It was Miss Murdstone who was arrived, and a gloom looking lady she was, dark like her brother whom she greatly resembled in face and voice. I had never at that time seen such a different lady altogether as Miss Murdstone was.

She was brought into the parlour with many tokens of welcome, and there she formally recognized my mother as a new and near relation. Then she looked at me and said:

Is that your new sister-in-law?

My mother again welcomed me.

"Generally speaking," said Miss Murdstone, "I don't like towns. How do you do, boy?"

Under these encouraging circumstances I replied that I was very well, and that I hoped she was the same, with such an indifferent grace, that Miss Murdstone disposed of me in two words:

"Wants nothing."

As well as I could make out, she had come for good, and had no intention of ever going again. She began to "help" my mother next morning, and was in and out of the store-closet all day, putting things to rights, and making havoc in the old arrangements.

She was up before anybody in the house was stirring.

On the very first morning after her arrival, when my mother came down to breakfast and was going to make the tea, Miss Murdstone gave her a kind of peck on the cheek, which was her nearest approach to a kiss, and said:

"Now, Clara, my dear, I am come here, you know, to relieve you of all the trouble I can. If you'll be so good as

to give me your keys, my dear. I'll attend to all this sort of thing in future."

From that time Miss Murdstone kept the keys in her own little bag all day, and under her pillow all night, and my mother had no more to do with them than I had.

My mother did not suffer her authority to pass from her without a shadow of protest. One night when Miss Murdstone had been discussing certain household plans to her brother, of which he signified his approval, my mother suddenly began to cry, and said she thought she might have been consulted.

"Clara!" said Mr. Murdstone sternly. "Clara! I wonder at you."

"Oh, it's very well to say you wonder, Edward!" cried my mother, "and it's very well for you to talk about firmness; but you wouldn't like it yourself. It's very hard that in my own house——"

"My own house?" repeated Mr. Murdstone. "Clara!"

"Our own house, I mean," faltered my mother, evidently frightened. "I hope you must know what I mean, Edward—it's very hard that in your own house I may not have a word to say about domestic matters."

"Edward," said Miss Murdstone, "let there be an end of this. I go to-morrow."

I am sure, my poor mother went on at a grievous disadvantage, and with many tears. "I don't want anybody to go. I should be very miserable and unhappy if anybody was to go. I don't ask much. I am not unreasonable. I only want to be consulted sometimes. I am very much obliged to anybody who assists me, and I only want to be consulted as a mere form, sometimes. I thought you were pleased, once, with my being a little inexperienced and girlish. Edward—I am sure you said so—but you seem to hate me for it now, you are so severe."

"Edward," said Miss Murdstone, again, "let there be an end of this. I go to-morrow."

' Jane Murdstone answered Mr Murdstone. 'What do you think? How dare you?'

Miss Murdstone made a good answer for poor little David, and he felt it before her eyes.

From that time down next morning rather earlier than usual, David passed outside the parlour door on his way to his mother's room. She was very earnest and happy in her conversation with Miss Murdstone, who, that day, granted, and a perfect reconciliation took place. I never knew my mother afterwards to give an opinion on any matter without first appealing to Miss Murdstone, or without having first ascertained by some sure means what Miss Murdstone's opinion was.

(The great thing that it was in the Murdstone household, besides the Murdstone religion which was strict and useful, I well remember the tremendous voice with which we used to go to church, and the hanged air of the place. If I move a finger or relax a muscle of my face Miss Murdstone pointed me with her prayer-book and rebuked my sin.)

There had been some talk on the subject of my going to boarding-school. Mr and Mrs Murdstone had discussed it, and my mother had agreed, as usual, with them. Nothing, however, was concluded on the subject yet. In the mean time I learnt as usual at home.

Should I ever forget those lessons? I had been apt enough to learn and I was, as usual, with my mother and I had lived alone together. I can fully remember learning the alphabet at her knee. To this day, when I look upon the fat black letters in the primer, their round and pouting shapes seem to press themselves again before me as they used to do. But they retain no feeling of disgust or resistance. On the contrary, I seem to have walked along a path of flowers as far as the cross the book, and to have been cheered by the gentleness of my mother's voice and manner all the while. (But these so-called lessons which I remember as the first I saw at my pen, and a great deal of dreary and misery.)

Let me remember how it used to be and bring me roaring back again.

I come into the parlour just after breakfast, with my books in exercise book and a slate. My mother is ready for me at her writing-table. But not half so ready as Mr. Murdstone in his easy-chair by the window (though he pretends to be reading a book) or as Miss Murdstone, sitting near my mother. The very sight of them has such an influence over me that I begin to feel the words I have been at infinite pains to get into my head all sailing away and going I don't know where. I wonder where they do go by the way.

I hand the first book to my mother. Perhaps it is a grammar perhaps a history or geography. I take a last dawning look at the page as I give it to her, and at last start off at a running pace when I have got it fresh. I trip over a word. Mr. Murdstone looks on. I trip over another word. Miss Murdstone looks up. I riddle, tumble over half-a-dozen words and stop. I think my mother would show me the book if she dared, but she does not dare. She glances at me covertly at them, under the book, and lays it by as an object to be worked up when my other tasks are done.

There is a pile of these streams very soon, and it comes like a rolling snowball. The larger it gets, the more stopped I get. (The case is so hopeless, and I feel that I am, wading in such a bog of nonsense, that I give up all idea of getting out, and abandon myself to my fate.) The desperate way in which my mother and I look at each other as I \_\_\_\_\_ on is truly mean and ugly.

One morning when I went into the parlour with my books, I found my mother looking anxious. Miss Murdstone looking fain, and Mr. Murdstone twisting something round the bottom of a cane—a little and under cane, which he let off bustling when I came in, and passed and switched in the air.

'I tell you, \_\_\_\_\_,' said Mr. Murdstone, 'I have been often flogged myself.'

"Certainly, my dear Jane," faltered my mother meekly.  
 "But—But do you think it did Edward good?"

"Do you think it did Edward harm, Clara?" asked Mr Murdstone, gravely.

"That's the point," said his sister.

To this my mother returned, "Certainly, my dear Jane," and said no more.

I felt apprehensive that I was personally interested in this dialogue, and sought Mr Murdstone's eye as it lighted on mine.

"Now David," he said, "you must be far more careful to-day than usual." He gave the cane another pause, and another switch, and having finished his preparation of it, laid it down beside him, with an impressive look, and took up his book.

This was a good freshener to my presence of mind, as I began; I felt the words of my lessons slipping off, not merely one, or line by line, but by the entire page.

We began badly, and went on worse. I had come in with an idea of distinguishing myself rather, conceiving that I was very well prepared, but it turned out to be quite a mistake. Book after book was added to the heap of failures, Miss Murdstone being firmly watchful of us all the time. At last my mother burst out crying.

"Clara!" said Miss Murdstone, in her warning voice.

"I am not quite well, my dear Jane, I think," said my mother.

I saw him wink, solemnly, at his sister, as he rose and said, taking up the cane:

"Why, Jane, we can hardly expect Clara to bear, with perfect firmness, the worry and torment that David has occasioned her to-day. That would be stoical. Clara is greatly strengthened and improved, but we can hardly expect so much from her. David, you and I will go up stairs, boy."

As he took me out at the door, my mother ran towards me. Miss Murdstone said, "Coral are you a perfect fool?" and interfered. I saw my mother stop her ears then, and I heard her crying.

He walked me up to my room slowly and gravely and, when we got there, he twisted my head under his arm.

"Mr Murdstone said I need to have 'Dull! Pray don't beat me.' I have tried to learn so, but I can't learn while you and Miss Murdstone are by. I can't indeed!"

"Can't you, indeed, David?" he said. "Well, try that!"

He hid my head as in a vice, but I twisted round him somehow and stopped him for a moment, cursing him and not to trouble me. It was only for a moment that I stopped him, for he cut me heavily on the instant afterwards and at the same instant I caught his arm with which he held me in my mouth, between my teeth, and bit it through. It sets my teeth on edge to think of it.

He put me then as if he would have sent me to death. Above all the noise we made I heard them running up the stairs, and crying out—I heard my mother crying out—and Peggotty. Then he was gone, and the door was locked outside, and I was lying, fevered and hot and torn, and sore, and raging in my pain, upon the floor.

How well I recollect that when I recovered, what an unnatural stillness seemed to reign through the whole house! I crawled up from the floor and saw my face in the glass, so swollen, red and ugly that I almost feared to meet it. My stripes were still and stiff and made me cry afresh when I moved. But they were nothing to the great I fear!

It had begun to grow dark and I had shut the window (I had been lying for the best part with my head upon the sill, by turning my legs down and leaning listlessly out), when the key was turned and Miss Murdstone came in with some bread and meat, and milk. These she put down upon the

table without a word glaring at me the while with exemplary firmness, and then retired locking the door after her.

I never shall forget the waking next morning, I was cheerful and fresh for the first time, but very soon felt weighed down by the stale and painful oppression of remembrance. Miss Murdstone reappeared before I was out of bed, told me, in so many words that I was free to walk in the garden for half an hour and no longer, and retired leaving the door open.

I did so, and did so every morning of my imprisonment which lasted five days. If I could have seen my mother alone I should have gone down on my knees to her and besought her forgiveness, but I saw no one. Miss Murdstone excepted, during the whole of the five days, at certain periods in the parlour, to which I was admitted by Miss Murdstone when every body else was present. Here I was chained, in a yery out of the way, all alone by myself near the door, and from this place I was contacted by no other person, any one at all from the two lower passages. I only observed that my mother was as far off from me as she could be, and kept her face another way so that I never saw it, and that Mr. Murdstone's hand was bound up in a large linen wrapper.

The length of those five days I can carry no idea of to any one. They occupy the place of years in my remembrance.

## CHAPTER V

On the last night of my restraint, I was awakened by hearing my own name spoken in a whisper. I started up in bed and putting out my arms in the dark said

"Is that you, Peggotty?"

There was no immediate answer, but presently I heard my name again, in a tone so very mysterious and awful, that I think I should have gone into a fit if it had not occurred to me that it must have come through the keyhole.

I groped my way to the door and putting my own lips to the keyhole, whispered,

"Is that you, Peggotty dear?"

"Yes, my own precious Davy," she replied.

"How's mamma dear Peggotty?" Is she very angry with me?"

"No. Not very."

"What's to be done with me, Peggotty dear? Do you know?"

"To-morrow, near London," was Peggotty's answer.

"When, Peggotty?"

"To-morrow."

"Shan't I see mamma?"

"Yes," said Peggotty, "to-morrow."

Then Peggotty lifted her mouth close to the keyhole, and delivered these words:

"Davy, dear! what I want to say is that you must never forget me. For I'll never forget you. And I'll take as much care of your mamma as ever I took of her. And I won't leave her."

Then I said to Peggotty, "Good-bye!" and I said, "Thank you! Thank you! Will you please tell me nothing, Peggotty? Will you write and tell Mr. Jemmy and little Emily and Mrs. Gummidge and Harriet that I am just as well as they might suppose, and that I sent em all my love especially to little Emily? Will you, if you please, Peggotty?"

The kind soul promised, and we both of us kissed the keyhole with the greatest affection. From that night there grew up in my breast a feeling for Peggotty which I cannot very well define.

In the morning Miss Murdstone appeared as usual, and told me I was going to school, which was not altogether such news to me as she supposed. She also informed me that when I was dressed, I was to come down stairs into the parlour, and have my breakfast. There I found her mother very pale and

with red velvet, and with a red velvet border  
from my suffering soul.

Oh, I wish you said that you had felt me :  
I love! Try to be better, try to be better! I love you,  
but I wish you would love me, that you should have some good  
passions in your heart.

\* May 10 - arrived in New York and Mr. M. ...  
when words ... at the ...

I asked for "Peggy" and it was not she, but the lady Mr. Morrison reported. My former acquaintance, the error was at the door, the box was taken out to the curb and lifted in.

\* (1977) *Journal of Management Studies* 14, 1-11.

Really say dear Jane, received my letter and  
 yes, I say. You are going for your own good. I hope, my  
 dear, you will come home in ten days, and be a better  
 boy."

$$1 - \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{1}{n} \right) = \frac{n-1}{n^2} = \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{n-1}{n} \right) = \frac{1}{n} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{n} \right) = \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{n-1}{n} \right)$$

certainly by the June 1854 my brother who was  
 head of the I forgive you my dear brother, could

• • • • •

Mr. Mundstone was good enough to take me out to the art and to say of the way that she hoped I would enjoy it. I am very glad that I got into the part and the day now worked off with it.

We might have gone a-out had a out and my pocket  
milk can of was quite wet through

Having by this time read as much as I possibly could I began to think I was going to use every day more.

## HUMPHREYS

What an amazing power I found as to me when I said  
to the machine. I received it by stroke from a firm with  
where the other part of the machine from I had done

The clerk's eye lighted on me as he was getting down, and he said at the looking-office door.

"Is there anybody here for a youngster, booked in the name of Murdstone from Bouverstone Suffolk to be left till called for?"

Nobody answered.

"Try and find if you please," said I, looking heavily down.

Is there anybody here for a youngster, booked in the name of Murdstone from Bouverstone Suffolk to be left till called for?" and the guard "there" Is there anybody?"

No. There was nobody.

I went into the looking-office and by invitation of the clerk on duty, passed behind the counter and sat down on the stool at which they weighed the luggage. Here as I sat looking at the precious packages and books, a man entered and whispered to the clerk, who presently slanted me off the stool and pushed me over to him.

As I went out of the office hand in hand with this new acquaintance I stole a look at him. He was a young man with hollow cheeks and a chin almost as black as Mr. Murdstone's.

"You're the new boy?" he said.

"Yes, sir," I said.

I supposed I was. I didn't know.

"I'm one of the masters at Salem House," he said.

I made him a bow and felt very much surprised.

We found the coach very near at hand, and got upon the seat, but I was so dead sleepy, that when we stopped on the road to take up some other class they put me inside where there were no passengers, and where I slept profoundly, until I found the coach going at a footpace up a steep hill among green leaves. Presently, it stopped and had come to its destination.



in peering at me, when Mr. Meak asked me what I did up there.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said I, "if you please, I'm looking for the dog."

"Dog?" said he. "What dog?"

"Isn't it a dog, sir?"

"Isn't what a dog, sir?"

"That's to be taken care of, sir, that bites?"

"No, Copperfield," said he, gravely, "that's not a dog. That's a boy. My instructions are, Copperfield, to put this placard on your back. I am sorry to make such a fussing with you, but I must do it."

With that he took me down, and tied the placard, which was neatly constructed for the purpose, on my shoulders like a klug-ark, and wherever I went afterwards I had the constant in of carrying it.

What I suffered from that placard need be no tongue. Whether it was possible for people to see me or not, I always fancied that some body was reading it. That comes from the wretched leg he had my sufferings. He was a worthy, and if he ever saw me leaning against a tree, or a wall, or the house, he roared out from his hole a dozen at a time, "Hullo, you wif! You Copperfield! Show that Judge Scatcherd what I report you!" The place ground I was a bare gravel yard, open to all the back of the house and the offices, and I knew that the servants read it, and the butcher read it, and the baker read it, that everybody, in a word, who came backwards and forwards to the house of a country when I was ordered to walk there, read that I was to be taken care of for I hit. I recollect that I positively began to have a dread of myself as a kind of wild boy who did it.

One day I was informed by Mr. Meak that Mr. Creakle would be home that evening. At the evening, after tea, I heard that he was come. Before bed time, I was fetched by the man with the wooden leg to appear before him.

Mr. Creeke's part of the house was a great deal more comfortable than mine and he had a beautiful garden that looked pleasant after the disarrangement. It seemed to me a bold thing to do to turn away from the passage I had come forth for, and I went on my way, thinking to Mr. Creeke's presence that so I might see when I was ushered into it, that I might see Mrs. Creeke, Miss Creeke, who were both there on the previous evening but Mr. Creeke, a stout gentleman with a white beard and hair and eyes in an arm chair, with a cane or stick in his hand.

But Mr. Creeke was the young gentleman whose name I had heard of before.

The wooden leg that turned me about so as to exhibit the parcel and having afforded time for a full survey of it, turned me round with my face to Mr. Creeke, and posted himself on Mr. Creeke's side. Mr. Creeke's face was fiery and his eyes were stern and deep in his head, he had thick veins in his forehead, a little nose and a large chin. He was bald on the top of his head and had some thin wet-looking hair that was just turning grey, brushed across each temple so that he two white streaks on his forehead. But the circumstance about him which impressed me most, was, that he had no voice but spoke in a whisper. The exertion this cost him, or the consequences of talking in that feeble way, made his angry face much more angry.

"Now," said Mr. Creeke, "What's the report of this boy?"

"There's nothing against him yet," returned the man with the wooden leg. "There has been no opportunity."

"I thought Mr. Creeke was disappointed."

"Come here, sir," said Mr. Creeke, beckoning to me.

"I have the happiness of knowing your father-in-law," whispered Mr. Creeke, taking me by the ear, "and a worthy man he is, and a man of strong character. He knows me."

and I knew that I could know more of him. And Mr. Creakle  
pinched my ear with tremendous pinches.

"Not yet, sir," I said, "I cannot say I have."

"No," he said, "Mr. Creakle," he said, "I will be  
soon. Hey?"

"You will soon," he said, "I will be soon with the  
wooden leg. I afterwards found that he was a very good man, with  
his strong voice, as Mr. Creakle said, 'I will be soon with the  
wooden leg.'"

I was very much surprised and I knew that if he  
pleased, I should be able to do so. I was very much surprised  
pinched it so hard.

"I am very much surprised," he said, "I will be soon with the  
wooden leg. I afterwards found that he was a very good man, with  
his strong voice, as Mr. Creakle said, 'I will be soon with the  
wooden leg.'"

A few days later the man with the wooden leg

"When I say I will do a thing, I will do it," said Mr. Creakle  
and when I say I will have a thing done, I will have it  
done."

"—Will have a thing done, I will have it done," repeated  
the man with the wooden leg.

"Now you have begun to know me, my young friend, and  
you may go. Take him away," said Mr. Creakle.

I was very glad to be ordered away. But I had a petition  
on my mind which concerned me so nearly, that I couldn't  
help saying, though I wondered at my own courage.

"If you please, sir——"

Mr. Creakle whistled, "Hah! What's this?" and bent  
his eyes upon me as if he would have burnt me up with them.

"If you please, sir," I faltered, "if I might be allowed  
(I am very sorry indeed, sir, for what I did) to take this writ-  
ing off, before the boys come back——"

Whether Mr. Creakle was in earnest, or whether he only  
did it to frighten me, I don't know, but he made a dash out  
of his chair before which I precipitately retreated.



I heard a great deal of talk about the school and its being  
 : big to do. I heard that Mr. Crumble had not preferred his  
 : school to being a Tartar with no reason that he was the stern-  
 : est and most severe master in the school about him, right  
 : and left, every one of the boys, laughing in among the boys  
 : like a trumpet and shouting out, "Crumble!" that he knew  
 : nothing about it, but the fact of it was that he had been a  
 : good many years ago a schoolmaster in the parish and  
 : had taken to the schoolmaster's life and was now a schoolmaster  
 : in London and taking away with Mr. Crumble's money.

I heard that the school was the school of whose name  
 : was Crumble was an old school which had formerly  
 : been a school for the poor and had been the schoolmaster  
 : for with Mr. Crumble's school was a schoolmaster and  
 : the school of the schoolmaster was Mr. Crumble's school,  
 : and having done a great deal of his work for him and know-  
 : ing his secrets.

But the greatest wonder that I heard of Mr. Crumble was  
 : that there was a boy in the school who was the very son  
 : of the schoolmaster and that boy was I Steffarth. Steffarth  
 : himself confirmed this.

Before long on that day a great deal of news  
 : was told me by the boys in the school and by the boys in the  
 : schoolroom and by the boys in the school as I told when Mr.  
 : Crumble entered the school and stood in the doorway and  
 : up and upon the boys in the school and a story book was given to  
 : the boys.

They stood at Mr. Crumble's elbow. He had no  
 : eyes and I saw him with his eyes so far away for  
 : the boys were all struck with him and none of them.

Mr. Crumble spoke to the boys.

"Now, boys, this is a new book. Take care what you're  
 : about, in this new book. I'm first of all to the lessons, I advise  
 : you for I come first of all to the parishment. I won't flinch.  
 : It will be of no use your reading your books you will not read."

the marks out that I shall give you. Now get to work every boy!"

When this lesson was over, and I had started to go, Mr. Creakle called me back and told me that if I was to be a doctor, he was famous for being, too. He then asked me the name and asked me what I thought of that. "Was it a cure for the boy? Was it a cure for the boy? Had it a cure for the boy? Did it bite the boy? Did it bite?" At every question he gave me a fleshy whack with that cane with which I was very much in fear.

Not that I need to say there were special rules of instruction which I received. On the contrary, in every one of the boys' lessons the same rules were applied with similar instances. For instance, Mr. Creakle made the round of the school every day. Had the establishment been writing and copying before the day's work began, and how much of it had written and copied before the day's work was over, I am really afraid to recollect, but I should seem to forget it.

In a tight sky-blue suit poor Traddles was the merriest and most miserable of all the boys. He was always being caned. I think he was caned every day that half-year except one holiday Monday when he was only ruled in both hands and was always going to write to his uncle about it, and never did. After laying his head on the desk for a little while he would cheer up somehow, begin to laugh again, and draw skeletons all over his slate, before his eyes were dry. I used at first to wonder what comfort Traddles found in drawing skeletons.

He was very honorable. Traddles was and held it as a solemn duty in the house to stand by one another. He suffered for this on several occasions, and particularly once, when Steerforth laughed in church and the Rector thought it was Traddles, and took him out. I see him now going away bravely, deeply, and bravely these things. He never said who was the real offender, though he was called for it next day, and was reproached so much by him that he came forth with a

the churchyard of another society and over the local  
 Directory. But he had his reason. "Society men there  
 was nothing of the sort in Tredwell and I was not to be  
 the typical person. For my part, I had been through  
 a good deal and I was not to have been with  
 Tredwell and nothing like as well to have been with  
 a respectable."

Mr. Tredwell continued his remarks and proved a  
 very useful friend. He was a very good man and he  
 honoured with his company. He could not or at all events  
 he didn't defend the fact Mr. Tredwell was very much  
 with me but whenever I had been there and was, ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup>  
 he always told me that I wanted a ~~man~~ <sup>man</sup> that  
 he wouldn't have stood it himself.

## CHAPTER VIII

Turn at last to my old and to my surprise and  
 delight I found my old friend and going home soon  
 I was at our house, and when I got into the hall, many  
 men were gathered about by the sound of my mother's  
 voice in the old parlour. She was sitting in a row there.

I believed from the society and thoughtful way in which  
 my mother mentioned her song that she was alone. And I  
 went softly into the room. She was sitting by the fire, look-  
 ing an instant, whose tiny hand she held against her neck. Her  
 eyes were looking down upon her face and she sat staring to  
 it. I was as far right, that she had no other occupation.

I spoke to her and she started and looked at me. But among  
 me, she called me her dear boy, her own boy, and coming  
 half across the room to meet me, knelt down upon the  
 ground and kissed me and laid my head down on the bosom  
 near the fire, where the cat was resting there and put its  
 hand up to my lips.



"I am glad to hear you are sorry I will," he replied.

The hand he gave me was the hand I had bitten. I could not restrain my eye from resting for an instant on a red spot upon it.

"How do you do, ma'am?" I said to Miss Murdstone.

"Ah dear me!" sighed Miss Murdstone, giving me the tea caddy scoop instead of her fingers. "How long are the holidays?"

"A month, ma'am."

"Counting from when?"

"From to-day, ma'am."

"Oh!" said Miss Murdstone. "Then here is no day

off."

I was not a favourite there with that lady. I felt that I made them as uncomfortable as they made me. If I went into the room where they were and they were talking together and my mother was there, the conversation would slow over for fear of the presence of my mother. If Mr Murdstone were there, I could not speak to him. If Miss Murdstone were there, I could not speak to her. I had perception enough to know that my mother was the victim always, that she was afraid to speak to me or be kind to me, lest she should give them some offence by her manner of doing so, and receive a lesson afterwards.

In the evening sometimes, I went and sat with Peggotty in the kitchen. There I was comfortable, and not afraid of being injured. But this resource was not approved of in the parlour.

Thus the holidays dragged away until the morning came when Miss Murdstone said, "Here is the last day off!" and gave me the closing cup of tea of the vacation.

I was not sorry to go. I had lapsed into a stupid state, but I was recovering a little and looking forward to Blunderbore, albeit Mr Creakle seemed behind him.



She was very kind to me. She kept me there all day, and left me alone sometimes, and I cried, and wore myself to sleep, and awoke and cried again. When I could cry no more, I began to think.

I thought of our house shut up and lashed. I thought of the little baby, who Mrs. Crease said, had been pining away for some time, and who, they believed, would die too. I thought of my father's grave in the churchyard by our house, and of my mother lying there beneath the tree I knew so well.

I left Salem House upon the morrow afternoon. I little thought then that I left it never to return.

When I reached home, I dropped out of the chaise behind, as quickly as possible.

I was in Peggotty's arms before I got to the door, and she took me into the house. Her grief burst out when she first saw me, but she controlled it soon, and spoke in whispers, and smiled softly, as if the dead could be disturbed. She had not been in bed I found for a long time. She sat up at night still, and watched. As long as her poor dear pretty was above the ground, she said, she would never desert her.

(If the funeral had been yesterday, I could not recollect it better.)

When we go out to the door, the bearers and their load are in the garden, and they move before us down the path, and past the elms, and through the gate, and into the churchyard, where I have so often heard the birds sing on a summer morning.

We stand around the grave. (The day seems different to me from every other day, and the light not of the same colour of a sadder colour.) Now there is a solemn hush, which we have brought from home with what is resting in the mould; and when we stand bare-headed, I hear the voice of the clergyman sounding remote in the open air, and yet distinct and plain saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord!" Then I hear sobs, and, standing apart among

the lookers-on. I see that good and faithful servant whom of all the people upon earth I love the best, and unto whom my childish heart is certain that the Lord will one day say, "Well done!"

It is over, and the earth is filled in, and we turn to come away.

Immediately after the funeral Miss Murdstone discharged Peggotty. When she left for Yarmouth, I was permitted by Mr. Murdstone to accompany her. I was glad to meet my humble friends again after my bereavement. Peggotty soon married and I returned to Blunderstone after a short while. I fell at once into a solitary condition. Mr. Murdstone and his sister now avoided me. Even the baby had died. I was not ill used, beaten or starved as before. But day after day, month after month, I was coldly neglected. (What would I have given to be sent to the hardest school—to have been taught something anyhow anywhere!) *P<sup>o</sup>*

One evening Mr. Quinion, a friend of Mr. Murdstone, came to see him. He lay at our house that night. After breakfast the next morning I had put my hair away, and was going out of the room, when Mr. Murdstone called me back. He then gravely repaired to another table where his sister sat herself at her desk. Mr. Quinion with his hands in his pockets stood looking out of the window, and I stood looking at them all.

"David," said Mr. Murdstone, "to the young this is a world for action, not for moping and drooping in."

"As you do," added his sister.

He gave her a look, half in remonstrance, half in approval, and went on:

"I suppose you know, David, that I am not rich. At any rate, you know it now. You have received some considerable education already. Education is costly; and even if it were not, and I could afford it, I am of opinion that it would not be at all advantageous to you to be kept at a school. What is before

you, is a fight with the world and the sooner you begin it the better."

(I think it occurred to me that I had already begun it, in my poor way)

"You have heard the counting-house mentioned sometimes," continued Mr. Murdstone.

"The counting-house sir," I repeated.

"Of Murdstone and Grinby in the wine trade," he replied. "I think I have heard the business mentioned sir. I said Mr. Quinion manages that business," he returned.

I glanced at the latter deferentially as he stood looking out of the window.

"Mr. Quinion suggests that it gives employment to some other boys, and that he sees no reason why it shouldn't, on the same terms, give employment to you," Mr. Murdstone resumed. "Those terms are that you earn enough for yourself to provide for your eating and drinking and pocket-money. Your lodging (which I have arranged for) will be paid by me. So will your washing."

"Which will be kept down to my estimate," said his sister. "Your clothes will be looked after for you too," said Mr. Murdstone. "as you will not be able yet awhile, to get them for yourself. So you are now going to London, David, with Mr. Quinion, to begin the world on your own account."

## CHAPTER IX

(I thus became, at ten years old, a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby.) Their warehouse was at the water side. It was down in Blackfriars, and was a crabby old house with a wharf of its own abutting on the water when the tide was in and on the mud when the tide was out and literally overrun with rats.

An important branch of Murdstone and Grinby's trade was the supply of wines and spirits to certain packet ships. I forgot to say where they really went. I know that a great many empty bottles were one of the consequences of this trade, and that certain men and boys were employed to examine them against the light, and to rinse and wash them. When the empty bottles ran short, there were labels to be pasted on full ones, or corks to be fitted to them, or seals to be put upon the corks, or finished bottles to be packed in casks. All this work was my work, and of the boys employed upon it I was one. My pay was six shillings a week.

On the first morning of my so-called employment, the oldest of the regular boys was summoned to show me my business. He informed me that his father was a surgeon. He also informed me that our principal acquaintance would be another boy, whose father was a waterman, who had the additional distinction of being a freeman.

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my bosom.

The morning household was at half past twelve, and there was general preparation for going to dinner when Mr. Quinion tapped at the counting-house window, and beckoned to me to go in. I went in, and was introduced by him to a bald-headed, starchy, middle-aged gentleman in a brown suit and black tight and shoes.

'This is Mr. Micawber,' said Mr. Quinion to me. 'And this is the stranger—that is my name.'

Mr. Micawber and Mr. Quinion, as known to Mr. Murdstone, He takes orders for us on commission when he can get any. He has been written to by Mr. Murdstone on the subject of your earnings, and he will receive you as a lodger.

'My address,' said Mr. Micawber, 'is Windsor Terrace,

Only I said I should be happy to see them every day and that  
you had the advantage of the best way.

I thanked him with a very hearty heart for it was leaving him  
him to offer to take that trouble.

And I was in the same way as I was when I was  
to Mrs. Marchmont's house and I was at a young wife  
was sitting in the parlor and I was at the time. The  
baby was one of twins.

There were two other people, Mr. Marchmont and  
about the same time. Mr. Marchmont was at the time and  
a lady appeared and I was at the time. I was at the time  
who was at the time and I was at the time.

I never thought of Mr. Marchmont's house and I was  
at the time and I was at the time and I was at the time  
to take the time. I was at the time and I was at the time  
and I was at the time and I was at the time. But Mr. Marchmont's  
house and I was at the time and I was at the time of  
private feeling must give way."

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

Mr. Marchmont's house and I was at the time and I was  
at the time and I was at the time and I was at the time  
and I was at the time and I was at the time.

"I think that he was in the house and I was at the time  
He was at the time and I was at the time and I was at the time  
he was at the time and I was at the time and I was at the time.

"If Mr. Marchmont's house and I was at the time and I was  
and Mrs. Marchmont's house and I was at the time and I was  
the house and I was at the time and I was at the time  
be at the time and I was at the time and I was at the time  
at present (not to mention the expenses from Mr.  
Marchmont).

I was at the time and I was at the time and I was at the time  
and I was at the time and I was at the time and I was at the time  
The centre of the  
street door was perfectly covered with a great brass plate on

which was engraved 'Mrs Micawber's Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies' but I never found that any young lady had ever been to school there, or that any young lady ever came or proposed to come, or that the least preparation was ever made to receive any young lady. The only visitors I ever saw or heard of, were creditors. They used to come at all hours. At these times Mr Micawber would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the length (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor, but within half an hour afterwards he would polish up his shoes with extraordinary pains, and go out humming a tune with a greater air of gentility than ever. Mrs Micawber was quite as elastic. I have known her to be thrown into fainting fits by the king's taxes at three o'clock, and to eat lamb chops broiled and drink warm ale (paid for with two shillings that had gone to the pawnbroker's) at four.

In this house, and with this family I passed my leisure time. My own exclusive breakfast of a pound, and not a pennyworth of milk, I provided myself, I kept another small loaf and a nucleus of cheese on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard, to make my supper on when I came back at night. This made a hole in the six or seven shillings I know well, and I was out at the warehouse all day, and had to support myself on that money all the week.

Mr Micawber's difficulties were an addition to the distressed state of my mind. In my forlorn state I became quite attached to the family. I have known him come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail, and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting bow windows to the house 'in case anything turned up' which was his favourite expression. And Mrs Micawber was just the same.

At last Mr Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested early one morning and carried over to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough. He told me as he went

out of the house that the God of day had now gone down upon him—and I really thought his heart was broken and mine too. But I heard, afterwards, that he was seen to play a lively game at skittles, before noon.

In due time, Mr Micawber was ordered to be discharged under the Insolvent Debtors Act, to my great joy. His creditors were not implacable and Mrs Micawber informed me that they had declared in open court that they bore him no malice.

I said to Mrs Micawber immediately after this

"May I ask, ma'am, what you and Mr Micawber intend to do, now that Mr Micawber is out of his difficulties, and at liberty? Have you settled yet?"

Mrs Micawber replied, My family are of opinion that, with a little interest something might be done for a man of his ability in the Custom House. The influence of my family being local, it is their wish that Mr Micawber should go down to Plymouth. They think it indispensable that he should be upon the spot."

"That he may be ready?" I suggested.

"Exactly," returned Mrs Micawber. "That he may be ready, in case of anything turning up."

"And do you go too, ma'am?"

She shed tears as she replied

"I never will desert Mr Micawber. Mr Micawber may have concealed his difficulties from me in the first instance, but his sanguine temper may have led him to expect that he would overcome them. The pearl necklace and bracelets which I inherited from mama, have been disposed of for less than half their value, and the set of coral, which was the wedding gift of my papa, has been actually thrown away for nothing. But I never will desert Mr Micawber. No!" cried Mrs Micawber, more affected than before. "I never will do it! It is of no use asking me!"

I felt quite uncomfortable—as if Mrs. Mallow had said I had asked her to do anything of the sort—and not looking at her in alarm.

## CHAPTER X

The Mallowers left soon after, and I too resolved to run away from home by some means or other, down into the country, to the only relation I had in the world, and to enquire after my aunt, Miss Betsey.

As I did not even know where Miss Betsey lived, I wrote a long letter to Fanny, and asked her, particularly if she remembered. In the course of that letter I told Fanny that I had just come out of bad prison.

Fanny's answer was quick, and was as good as a letter of affection to me. She ordered the half-penny, and told me that Miss Betsey lived near Dover. I determined to run for my life, and resolved to set out in quest of her.

I took care to say that was what I intended to do, but I did not say that I was a young man with a empty pocket, and that I had no money. I ran after him as fast as I could, but I had no chance to get out of him. I narrowly escaped to be run over twenty times at least in half a mile. Now I lost him, now I saw him, now I lost him, now I was cut at with a whip, now shouted at, now down in the mud, now up again, now running into somebody's arms, now running headlong as a post. At length, confused by the light and the darkness, whether half London might not by this time be turning out for my apprehension, I left the young man to go where he would with my box and money, and putting and running but never stopping, I went about for Greenwich, which I had understood was on the Dover Road. I had now only three half pence with me, and yet I had no intention of coming back.

I trudged on miserably though as fast as I could, until I happened to pass a little shop where it was written up that ladies' and gentlemen's watch-cases were bought and that the best price was given for them, broken and rotten stuff.

My late experience with Mr. and Mrs. Blower suggested to me that here might be a means of keeping off the wolf for a little while. I went up the next street to look off my watch-case, and I really sold my arm, and came back to the shop where it was sold for ten pence.

I felt very badly, early that day, and I was very tired when that I should have to make the best of my way to Dover in a short and a poor of transport and might have my all time if I got there even in that trim.

A party had agreed to go for some time, which I was to take care to do. This was to be the end of the world at the back of my head, and I was very much in the Dover Road.

It was not very far from the end of the road, but I found it and I found a horse and a cart and I lay down by it.

Sleep came upon me as I was very much exhausted, and I was very much against when I was there were I was and I was very much tired that night and I dreamed of being in my school and looking to the boys in the room. The warm heat of the sun and the ringing of the getting up bell at Seven Hours awoke me next morning.

I got, that Sunday, through three and twenty miles on the worst road though not very easy for I was new to that kind of toil.

Before next morning that I could not take a very the way that day if I were to reserve my strength for getting to my journey's end. I resolved to make the sale of my jacket its principal business. It had to be sold after a good deal of haggling, to a drunkard in a shop for only sixteen pence.

At last I reached Dover and found out my Aunt's house after a good deal of enquiry. It was a very neat little cottage with cheerful bow windows and a small square gravelled court or garden in front of it full of flowers carefully tended and smelling deliciously.

My shoes were by this time in a woeful condition. My hat was crushed and bent. My shirt and trousers, stained with heat, dew, grass, and the Kentish soil on which I had slept, were torn and ragged. My hair had known no comb or brush since I left London. My face, neck and hands from unaccustomed exposure to the air and sun were burnt to a berry brown. In this plight, and with a strong consciousness of it, I wanted to introduce myself to, and make my first impression on, my formidable aunt.

Now there came out of the house a lady with her handkerchief tied over her nose, and a pair of gardening gloves on her hands, wearing a gardening pocket like a woman's apron, and carrying a great knife. I knew her immediately to be Miss Betsey, for she came strolling out of the house exactly as my poor mother had so often described her staking up our garden at Blunderstone Rookery.

I watched her, with my heart at my lips, as she marched to a corner of her garden, and stooped to dig up some little root there. Then, without a scrap of courage, but with a great deal of desperation, I went softly in and stood beside her, touching her with my finger.

"If you please, ma'am," I began.  
She started and looked up.

"If you please, aunt."

"Eh?" exclaimed Miss Betsey, in a tone of amazement I have never heard approached.

"If you please, aunt, I am your nephew."

"Oh Lord!" said my aunt. And sat flat down in the garden-path.

"I am David Copperfield of Blunderstone, in Suffolk—where you came on the night when I was born, and saw my dear mamma. I have been very unhappy since she died. I have been slighted and taught nothing, and thrown upon myself, and put to work not fit for me. It made me run away to you. I was robbed at first setting out, and have walked all the way, and have never slept in a bed since I began the journey."

My aunt, with every sort of expression but wonder discharged from her countenance, sat on the gravel, staring at me, until I began to cry, when she got up in a great hurry, collared me, and took me into the parlour. Her first proceeding there was to unlock a tall press, bring out several bottles, and pour some of the contents of each into my mouth. When she had administered these restoratives, as I was still quite hysterical, and unable to control my sobs, she put me on the sofa, with a shawl under my head.

After a time she ringed the bell. Janet, said my aunt, when her servant came in. "Go up stairs, give the compliments to Mr. Dick, and say I wish to speak to him. Mr. Dick was a distant relation of hers, when his brother's unkindness had thrown upon the charity of Miss Fagson. He was a good soul, but rather eccentric."

My aunt, with her hands behind her, walked up and down the room, into the gentleman's arms in laughing.

"Mr. Dick," said my aunt, "you have heard me mention David Copperfield?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Well, this is his boy, his son. He would be as like his father as it is possible to be, if he was not so like his mother, too."

"His son?" said Mr. Dick. "David's son? Indeed!"

"Yes," pursued my aunt, "and he has done a pretty piece of business. He has run away. Now here you see young David Copperfield, and the question I put to you is, what shall I do with him?"



"David's son?" said Mr. Dick with an attentive puzzled face.

"Exactly so," returned my aunt. "What would you do with him, now?"

"Do with David's son?" said Mr. Dick.

"Ay," replied my aunt, "with David's son."

"Oh!" said Mr. Dick. "Yes. Do with him—I should put him to bed."

Janet looked at my aunt with the same complacent triumph that I had remarked before. "Mr. Dick sets us all right. If that is ready, we'll take the car up to it."

My aunt wrote to Mr. Murdstone about me, and in due course he replied, to my infinite terror, that he was coming to speak to her himself on the next day. On the next day my aunt sat at work at the window and I sat by, counting the time restlessly when she gave a sudden alarm of clocks and to my astonishment and amazement I found Miss Murdstone on a side-saddle ride deliberately over the sacred piece of green, and stop in front of the house, looking about her.

"Go away with you!" cried my aunt, shaking her head and her fist at the window.

My aunt was surprised by the boldness with which Miss Murdstone looked at her and I seized the opportunity to inform her who it was, and that the gentleman now coming near the office for the way up was very steep, and he had dropped that, was Mr. Murdstone himself.

"I don't care who it is!" cried my aunt, still shaking her head, and gathering nothing but welcome from the bow window. "I won't be trespassed upon. I won't allow it. Go away!" Janet turned him round. "Lead him off!" and I saw, from behind my aunt, a sort of hurried little piece, in which the denary stood rearing everlastingly, with its legs planted different ways, while Janet tried to pull him round by the bridle. Mr. Murdstone tried to lead him on Miss

Murdstone struck at Janet, but she was so quick and so well protected by her brother, that she was not hurt. The man who had come to see the engagement shouted vigorously.

Miss Murdstone, during the latter portion of the contest, had dismounted, and was now waiting with her brother at the bottom of the steps, until my aunt should be at leisure to receive them. My aunt, who, though ruffled by the combat, took no notice of their presence until they were announced by Janet.

"Still I go away," said my aunt, I asked, trembling.

"No," said my aunt, "Certainly not!" With which she pushed me into a corner near her, and fenced me in with a chair, as if it were a prison or a bar of justice. The position I continued to occupy during the whole interview, and from it I now saw Mr. and Miss Murdstone enter the room.

"Oh!" said my aunt, "I was not aware at first to whom I had the pleasure of expecting. But I do not allow anybody to ride over that turf!"

Your reputation is rather awkward to strangers," said Miss Murdstone.

"Is it?" said my aunt.

Mr. Murdstone seemed afraid of a renewal of hostilities, and interposing to say,

"Miss Trotwood!"

"I beg your pardon," said my aunt, "but I am not a stranger."  
"You are the Mr. Murdstone who married the widow of my late nephew David Copperfield, of Blunderstone Rookery?"

"I am," said Mr. Murdstone.

Janet said my aunt, ringing the bell, "my compliments to Mr. Dick, and beg him to come down."

Until he came, my aunt sat perfectly upright and stiff, frowning at the wall. When he came, my aunt performed the ceremony of introduction.

Mr. Dick stood among the group with a grave and attentive expression of face. My aunt then, after a short time, turned to Mr. Murdstone, who went on.

"This unhappy boy, Miss Trotwood, has been the occasion of much domestic trouble and uneasiness, both during the lifetime of my late dear wife and since. He has a sullen, rebellious spirit, a violent temper, and an untoward, intractable disposition. Both my sister and myself have endeavoured to correct his vices, but ineffectually. I place this boy under the eye of a friend of my own, in a respectable business, it does not please him, he runs away from it, makes himself a common vagabond about the country, and comes here, in rags, to appeal to you, Miss Trotwood."

"But about the respectable business first," said my aunt. "If he had been your own boy, you would have put him to it, just the same, I suppose?"

If he had been my brother's own boy, returned Miss Murdstone, striking in, "his character, I trust, would have been altogether different."

"And now what have you got to say next?" said my aunt.

"Merely this, Miss Trotwood," he returned. "I am here to take David back, to take him back unconditionally, to dispose of him as I think proper, and to deal with him as I think right. Is he ready to go? If he is not—and you tell me he is not—my doors are shut against him henceforth, and yours, I take it for granted, are open to him."

"And what does the boy say?" said my aunt. "Are you ready to go, David?"

I answered "No," and entreated her not to let me go.

"Mr. Dick," said my aunt, "what shall I do with this child?"

Mr. Dick considered, hesitated, brightened, and rejoined, "Have him measured for a suit of clothes directly."

She pulled me towards her and said to Mr. Murdstone

"You can go when you like, I'll take my chance with the boy. If that's all you say as to at least I can go as much as

him then, as you have done. But I don't believe a word of it. Good bye."

"You consider yourself protected, then, with me of the child Mr. Dick said was lost after they had lost."

"I will protect said Mr. Dick to be the guardian of David's son."

"Very good," returned my aunt, "that is settled. I have been thinking of looking for Mr. Dick that I might call him Trotwood?"

"Yes to be sure," Yes, I would expect," said Mr. Dick.

Thus I began my life, with a new name and with everything new about me.

## CHAPTER XI

"I'll send you out to the young."

"Should you like to go to school at Canterbury?"

I replied that I should like it very much, as it was so near her.

"Good," said my aunt. "Should you like to go to-morrow?"

I was not surprised by the suddenness of the proposal and said, "Yes."

"Good," said my aunt again. "Just in the grey pony and change to-morrow morning at ten o'clock and pick up Master Trotwood's clothes to-night."

My aunt, who was perfectly indifferent to public opinion, drove the grey pony through Dover in a modest manner, sitting high and stiff like a state coachman.

"Is it a large school, aunt?" I asked.

"Why, I don't know," said my aunt. "We are going to Mr. Waghell's first."

"Does he keep a school?" I asked.

"No, Trot," said my aunt. "He keeps an office."

At last the carriage stopped at a small building with a sign over the door that said "Burial" and a coffin was buried in the ground.

When the carriage stopped at the door, and my eyes were intent upon the house, I saw a cadaverous face appear at a small window on the ground floor and quickly disappear. The low arched door then opened, and the face came out. It belonged to a red haired person—a youth of fifteen, as I take it now, but looking much older—whose hair was cropped as close as the closest shaven, who had hardly any eyebrows and no eye-lashes. He was high shouldered and bony, and had a long, lank, skeleton hand.

"Is Mr. Wickfield at home, Ursh Heep?" said my aunt.

"Mr. Wickfield's at home, ma'am," said Ursh Heep, "if you'll please to walk in there," pointing with his long hand to the room he meant.

We got out, and went into his room.

"Well, Miss Trotwood," said Mr. Wickfield, for I soon found that it was he, and that he was a lawyer, and steward of the estates of a rich gentleman of the county, "what wind blows you here? Not an ill wind, I hope?"

"No," replied my aunt. "I have not come for any law."

"This is my grand-nephew," said my aunt.

"Wasn't aware you had one, Miss Trotwood," said Mr. Wickfield.

"I have adopted him," said my aunt. "and I have brought him here, to put him to a school where he may be thoroughly well taught, and well treated."

After a little discussion, he proposed to take my aunt to the best local school that she might see it and judge for herself.

Though the advantages of the school were undeniable my aunt did not approve of any of the boarding houses proposed for me, and it was finally settled that I should stay with Mr. Wickfield for the present.



into them and showed me what she knew of them and what was the best way to learn and understand them

Frank was an artful work of Mr. Wickfield, and was of very industrious habits. Once I found him working hard late at night. "I suppose you are quite a great lawyer?" I said, after looking at him for some time.

Mr. Master Copperfield? said Uriah. "Oh, no! I'm a very simple person. My mother is likewise a very simple person. We live in a humble house. Master Copperfield, but have much to be thankful for. My father's former calling was humble. He was a sexton."

I asked Urdah if he had ~~met~~ with Mr Wicklow long

"I have been working on for year Master Copperfield," said Uriah.

" Perhaps you'd be a partner in Mr Wickfield's business  
one of these times. I don't think much of it, and I don't like to make myself agreeable, and  
it will be Wrentham and Deep, or Deep late Wrentham."

"Oh, no, Master supported returned Unan, shaking his head. "I am not here to argue for that! If you would come and see it, my mother and I will take a cup of tea at our new dwelling, mother would be as glad of your company as I should be."

I said I should be glad to come

One morning I met Frank in the street. He reminded me of the promise I had made to take tea with him and his mother sitting with a sister. But I didn't expect you to keep it. Master Copperhead were so very unkind."

I really had not yet been able to make up my mind whether I liked Uriah or detested him, and I was very doubtful about it still. But I felt it quite as affairs to be impossible.

So at six o'clock that evening, which was one of the only office evenings I announced myself as ready, and I rushed

Mother and be proud, indeed he said as we walked  
away together



We entered a low, old-fashioned room, walked straight into from the street, and found there Mrs. Heep, who was the dead image of Uriah, only short. She received me with the utmost humility, and said, "Unble we are, unble we have been, unble we shall ever be. We know our station and are thankful in it."

Presently they began to talk about aunts, and then I told them about mine, and about fathers and mothers, and then I told them about mine, and then Mrs. Heep began to talk about fathers-in-law, and then I began to tell her about mine, but stopped, because my aunt had advised me to observe silence on that subject. (They did just what they liked with me, and wormed things out of me that I had no desire to tell, with a certainty I blush to think of.)

I had begun to be a little uncomfortable, and to wish myself well out of the visit, when a figure walked in, exclaiming loudly, "Copperfield! Is it possible?"

It was Mr. Micawber who just happened to be passing that way.

I could do no less, under these circumstances, than make Mr. Micawber known to Uriah Heep and his mother, which I accordingly did.

"Ma'am," said Mr. Micawber to Mrs. Heep, with a bow, "you are very obliging. What are you doing, Copperfield? Still in the wine trade?"

I was excessively anxious to get Mr. Micawber away, and replied, with my hat in my hand, and a very red face, I have no doubt, that I was a pupil at Doctor Strong's.

"A pupil?" said Mr. Micawber, raising his eyebrows. "I am extremely happy to hear it."

"Shall we go and see Mrs. Micawber, sir?" I said to get Mr. Micawber away.

"If you will do her that favour, Copperfield," replied Mr. Micawber, rising.

"Mr. Heep! Good evening Mrs. Heep! Your servant," he said and then walked out with us.

It was a little inn where Mr. Micawber put up, and he occupied a small room in it. Here, reclining on a small sofa, and beneath a picture of a race horse with her head close to the fire, was Mrs. Micawber. She was amazed but very glad to see me.

"I thought you were at Plymouth now," I said to Mrs. Micawber as Mr. Micawber went out.

"My dear Master Copperfield," she replied, "we went to Plymouth (But the truth is, the fact is not wanted in the Custom House) The local influence of my family was quite unavailing to obtain any employment in that department for a man of Mr. Micawber's abilities. In fact that branch of my family which is settled in Plymouth became quite opposed to Mr. Micawber, where we had been there a week. Under such circumstances we all were back to London. Mr. Micawber was not prepared to heed to think that there might be an opening for a man of his talent in the Medway Coal Trade. Then, as Mr. Micawber very properly said, the first step to be taken clearly was to come and see the Medway. Which we came and saw. I say 'we' Master Copperfield, for I never will," continued Mrs. Micawber with emphasis, "I never will desert Mr. Micawber."

"We came," repeated Mrs. Micawber, "and saw the Medway. My opinion of the coal trade on that river is that it may require talent, but that it certainly requires capital. Talent, Mr. Micawber has, capital, Mr. Micawber has not. We saw, I think, the greater part of the Medway, and that is my individual conclusion. Being so near here, Mr. Micawber was of opinion that it would be rash not to come on, and see the Cathedral. Firstly on account of its being so well worth seeing, and our never having seen it, and secondly, on account of the great probability of something turning up in a cathedral town. We have been here three days. Nothing has, as yet,



turned up, and we are at present waiting for a remittance from London, to discharge my pecuniary obligations at this hotel."

I expressed my sincere sympathy for them, and when I took my leave of them, they both pressed me to come and dine before they went away.

As I was looking out of the window that same evening it surprised me, and made me rather uneasy, to see Mr Micawber and Uriah Heep walk past my room. Uriah humbly sensible of the honour that was done him, and Mr Micawber taking a great delight in extending his patronage to Uriah.

I dined with the Micawbers next evening, and I never saw anybody so thoroughly joyful as Mr Micawber was down to the very last moment of the evening, when I took a hearty farewell of himself and his amiable wife. Consequently I was not prepared, at seven o'clock next morning, to receive the following communication dated the past noon of the evening, a quarter of an hour after I had left him.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

"The die is cast—it is over. Hiding the ravages of age with a sly mask of mirth, I have not informed you this evening, that there is no hope of the remittance! Under these circumstances, alike humiliating to and re, humiliating to a degree, and humiliating to relief, I have discharged the pecuniary liabilities contracted at this establishment, by giving a note of hand made payable fourteen days after date, at my residence, Portenille, London. When it becomes due, it will not be taken up. } The result is destructive. The belt is snapping and the tree must fall."

Let the wretched man who now addresses you my dear Copperfield, be a lesson to you through life. He writes with that intention and in that hope. (If he could think himself of so much use, one gleam of day might, by possibility pene-

state into the cheerless dungeon of his remaining existence—though his longevity is at present (to say the least of it), extremely problematical.

This is the last communication, my dear Copperfield, you will ever receive

" From

" The

" Beggared Outcast,

" WILKINS MICAWBER."

## CHAPTER XII

When I left school, my next and I heard many grave denunciations on the calling to which I should be devoted. At last it was settled that I should be a doctor. Miss Betsey took me to the office of Messrs. Sparrow and Jorkins in Doctors' Commons. Mr. Sparrow informed us that the premium was a thousand pounds. I began my month's probation, however, whenever I pleased. My aunt took for me a furnished set of chambers in the Strand. I was delighted with the place. Mrs. Crupp was to be my cook, and expressly intimated that she should always regard me as a son.

The morning I received here a note from Agnes inviting me to see her at the house of her father's agent Mr. Watercock, in Finsbury, Holborn. When I met her she asked me if I had seen Uriah.

" Uriah Heep?" said I. " No. Is he in London?"

" He comes to the office downstairs every day," returned Agnes. " He was in London a week before me, I am afraid, on disagreeable business, Trotwood."

" On some business that makes you uneasy, Agnes, I see," said I. " What can that be?"

" I believe he is going to enter into partnership with papa."



"What Udd!" "That poor fellow worm himself into such promotion!" I cried indignantly.

"I wish," I said, "after an honest day's work, that I had more of the same sort of paper. It is so useful. He has mastered papa's weaknesses, fostered them, and taken advantage of them, until—to say all that I mean in a word—papa is afraid of him."

Mrs. Waterbrook invited us to the next dance, and when I came I found Uriah Heep among the company in a sort of black coat and top hat. In the new world I shook hands with him, but I was not at all comfortable. There were other guests. But there was one who attracted my attention before I could be introduced. He was a man who appeared as Mr. Landless. My mind flew back to Susan's House.

After dinner I was very glad indeed to get up-stairs to Agnes, and to talk with her in a corner, and to introduce Traddles to her. He was shy, but agreeable, and the same good natured creature still. As he was obliged to leave early, on account of going away next morning for a month, I had not nearly so much conversation with him as I could have wished, but we exchanged addresses, and promised ourselves the pleasure of another meeting when he should come back to town.

I remained with the company were some conversation with Agnes, and hearing her sing was such a delightful reminder to me of my happy life in the grave old house she had made so beautiful, that I could have remained there half the night, but, having no excuse for staying any longer, when the lights of Mr. Waterbrook's society were all snuffed out, I took my leave very much against my inclination.

Uriah was close behind me when I went down-stairs, asking if I would come home to my rooms, and have some coffee.

"I will," I said. "I beg your pardon, Mister Copperfield, but the other comes so natural,

"I don't like that you should put a constraint upon yourself to ask a humble person like me to go it over."

"There is no constraint in the case," said I. "Will you come?"

"I should like to, very much," replied Uriah, with a writhing

"Well, then, come along!" said I.

"You have heard something I deserve of a charge in my expectations, Master Copperfield? I should say, Master Copperfield?" observed Uriah.

"Yes," said I, "something."

"Ah! I thought Mrs. Agnes would know of it," he joyfully returned. "I'm glad Mrs. Agnes knows of it. Oh, thank you, Master Copperfield."

I could have sworn I was drunk at that time, or of the rage, for having cut out of me the consciousness of anything concerning Agnes. I was not a teetotaler, but I only drank my coffee.

"What a prophet you have shown yourself, Master Copperfield," pursued Uriah. "But now what a prophet you have proved yourself to be! Don't you remember saying to me once, that perhaps I should be a partner in Mr. Wickfield's business, and perhaps it might be Wickfield and Heep? You may not recollect it, but when a person is under Master Copperfield, a person treasures such things up."

"I recollect talking about it," said I, "though I certainly did not think it very likely then."

"Oh! who would have thought it likely, Master Copperfield?" returned Uriah, with a smile. "I am sure I didn't myself. I recollect saying with my own lips that I was a neck you under. So I considered myself really and truly."

He sat down at last, and I got on my feet, looking at the fire, as I looked at him.

"But the unluckiest persons, Master Copperfield," he presently resumed, "may be the instruments of good. I am glad

to think I have met the mistress of good to Mr. Wickfield, and that I now see one who what a worthy man he is, Master Copperfield. But how important he has been!

"I am sorry to hear it," said I. "I could not help adding, rather pointedly, 'on all accounts'."

"Do not say so," Master Copperfield replied I said. "On all accounts. Miss Agnes says so. You must remember your own eloquent expressions. Master Copperfield, but I remember how you said one day that every day must admire her and how I thanked you for it."

"I remember I am," he whispered better, and looked at them, and at the trees again. "You are my mother-in-law, and I am as proud of her as I could be. I have never seen the image of Miss Agnes. I don't mind trusting you with her secret. Master Copperfield, for I have always overheard towards you from the first moment I had the pleasure of talking with you. I am proud, but I am not proud of her name. I am Master Copperfield with what a pleasure I have to be around her. Agnes walks with me."

I believe I had a feeling of seeing the reddest power out of the fire, and running through with it. It went from me with a shock. He had been from a ride. But the image of Agnes, sitting by me, as a thought of her red-tinted skin, as I remembered in my mind (when I looked at her, sitting always as if his mind was in his hand) and made me feel as if he seemed to swell and grow before my eyes, the room filled with the echoes of his voice, and the strange feeling to which, perhaps, no one is quite a stranger, and all this had occurred before, at some distant time, and that I knew what he was going to say next, took possession of me.

94 (A true observation of the sense of power that there was in his face, did more to bring back to my remembrance the authority of Agnes in its full force, than any effort I could have made.) I asked him, with a better appearance of composure

that I should have the pleasure of a minute to see whether he had made his feelings known to Agnes.

"Oh no, Master Copperfield," he returned, "it does not. Not to any one but you. You see I am only just coming from my law studies. I trust a good deal of use on her observing how useful I am to her father (for I trust to be very useful to him indeed, Master Copperfield) and how I smooth the way for him and keep him straight. She's so much attached to her father, Master Copperfield, and what a lovely thing it is in a daughter, that I think she may come on his account, to be kind to me."

(I fathomed the depth of the riddle whose sense I understood why he said it here.)

### CHAPTER XIII

Mr. Spenlow was a well-wet with only one child—a daughter. After I had been introduced, he invited me to spend a week-end with him. We left the office one Saturday evening in his phaeton, and soon reached the house at Newstead with a beautiful garden and a lawn.

"Where is Miss Dora?" said Mr. Spenlow to the servant. "Dora!" I thought. "What a beautiful name!"

We turned into a room next at hand and I heard a voice say, "Mr. Copperfield, my daughter Dora, and my daughter Dora a confidential friend." It was, no doubt, Mr. Spenlow's voice, but I didn't know it and I didn't care where it was. (All was over in a moment. I had fulfilled my destiny. I was a captive and a slave. I loved Dora Spenlow to distraction.)

She was more than human to me. She was a Fairy, a Sylph!

"I," observed a well-remembered voice when I had bowed and murmured something, "have seen Mr. Copperfield before."

The speaker was not Dora. No, the confidential friend, Miss Marjstone!

I said, "How do you do, Miss Murdstone? I hope you are well." She answered, "Very well." I said, "How is Mr. Murdstone?" She replied, "My brother is robust. I am obliged to you."

Mr. Speckewas, who I suppose, they had surprised to see us recognize each other, then put in his word.

"I am glad to meet you," he said, "I reported that you and Miss Murdstone were warmly acquainted."

"Mr. Copperfield and myself," said Miss Murdstone, with severe composure, "are no longer acquainted. We were once warmly acquainted. Our acquaintance was separated as soon as we were separated."

It did not occur to me in the time before this that I had a letter from Peggotty when I was at Dover, telling me that Doctor and her were out of the forenoon at our old home, and that Mr. and Miss Murdstone had gone away.

We had a quiet breakfast, and departed early next morning, and I left the public business of taking the train to London in the platform, and she stood on the doorstep with Jip, her little dog, in her arms.

"I am delighted to see you," I reported, "and I shall see you when I called on her next day."

"You are reading for the bar, Mr. Waterbrook advised me?" said I.

"Why, yes," said Traddles, rubbing his hands slowly over one another. "I am reading for the bar. The fact is, I have just begun to keep my terms, after rather a long delay. It is some time since I was advised, but the payment of that hundred pounds was a great pull. A great pull!" said Traddles, with a wince, as if he had had a tooth out.

"You were brought up by an uncle?" said I.

"Of course I was!" said Traddles. "Yes, I had an uncle. He died soon after I left school, and I wasn't provided for."

"Did you get nothing, Traddles, after all?"

"Oh dear yes!" said Traddles. "I got fifty pounds."

I had never been brought up to any profession and at first I was at a loss what to do for myself. However I began, with the assistance of the son of a professional man to copy law writings. Fortunately, I soon became acquainted with a person in the publishing way, who was getting up an Encyclopedia, and he set me to work, and indeed (sitting at his table) I am at work for him at this minute. So by little and little and not saying high, I managed to scrape up the hundred pounds at last. Now, Copperfield, you are so exactly what you used to be with that agreeable face and it is so pleasant to see you that I shan't conceal anything. Therefore you must know that I am engaged. Sophy is a curate's daughter one of ten, down in Devonshire. She is the dearest girl, but our motto is 'Wait and Hope'. This is the end of my prating about myself, I get on as well as I can. I don't make much, but I don't spend much. In general I board with the people down-stairs who are very agreeable people indeed. Both Mr and Mrs Micawber have seen a good deal of life and are excellent company.

'Mr and Mrs Micawber!' I repeated. 'Why I am intimately acquainted with them!'

I begged Traddles to ask his landlord to wake up, and Mr Micawber came into the room with a genteel and youthful air. Nothing had yet turned up, and Mr Micawber was in want as before. Yet he insisted on my staying to dinner, but I declined the invitation.

Mr Spenslow once invited me to join a little picnic on the occasion of Dora's birthday. My happiness knew no bounds and I rode to Norwood in the morning. Dora was sitting on a garden seat under a rose tree, upon that beautiful morning, among the butterflies in a white hip bonnet and a dress of celestial blue!

'You'd be glad to hear, Mr Copperfield,' said Dora when she saw me 'that that cross Miss Murdstone is not here. She

has gone to her brother's marriage and will be away at least three weeks. Isn't that delightful?

I said I was sure it must be delightful to her and all that was delightful to her was delightful to me.

Mr. Spewlow now came out of the house, and we all waved from the lawn towards the carriage, which was getting ready. It was to take the party out of town.

I shall never have seen a ride again.

I don't know as yet where we went. It was a good spot on a hill, carpeted with soft grass. There were shady trees and flowers, and as far as the eye could see a rich landscape.

We all unpacked our baggage and employed ourselves in getting dinner ready.

After dinner I tried to get a drink. When I drank it I attempted to interrupt my conversation for that purpose. I caught Dora's eye as I bowed to her, and I thought it looked approving.

I was happier than ever when the party broke up. I returned to London the same evening but paid another visit to Dora soon after, and Dora and I were engaged. I wrote a long letter to Agnes, in which I tried to make her understand how best I was and what a darling Dora was.

But Dora stipulated that we were never to be married without her papa's consent, and were to keep our secret from Mr. Spewlow for the present.

## CHAPTER XIV

About this time Traddles called one day and I enquired how Mr. Micawber was. He said, "He is quite well, thank you. I am not living with him at present. He has handed his name to Mortimer in consequence of his temporary embarrassments, and he won't come out till after dark—and then in spectacles. There was no excuse for it into our house."

for rent. Within a week another execution came in. It broke up the establishment. I have been living in a furnished apartment since then, and the Mortimers have been very private indeed. I was shocked to hear this.

But a much greater shock was in store for me. I went out one evening with Frances and Peggotty, who had been living with me since her husband's death. When I returned to my sitting-room, I found my Aunt sitting in a quantity of baggage with her two birds before her, and her cat on her knee, like a feline Robinson Crusoe, drinking tea, and Mr. Dick standing thoughtfully watching her, as he played about him!

"My dear aunt," said I, "Why waste an unexpected pleasure?"

We could say no more, and Mr. Dick and I cordially shook hands.

(I knew my aunt was partly well to know that she had something of importance on her mind, and that there was far more matter in this world than a stranger might have supposed.) I noticed how her eyes fastened on me when she thought my attention otherwise occupied.

As I knew she would only speak in her own good time, I sat down near her.

First, said my aunt at last, when she had finished her tea, and had smoothed down her dress, and wiped her lips, "Have you got to be true and self-reliant?"

"I hope so, aunt."

"Then why, my love," said my aunt, looking earnestly at me, "why do you think I prefer to sit upon this property of mine to-night?"

I shook my head, unable to guess.

"Because," said my aunt, "it's all I have. Because I'm ruined, my dear!"

(If the house, and every one of us, had tumbled out into the river together, I could hardly have received a greater shock.)

"Dick knows it," said my aunt, laying her hand steadily on my shoulder. "I am ruined, my dear child! All I have in the world is in this room, except the cottage, and that I have left Janet to let."

I tried to ascertain whether Mr. Dick had any understanding of the causes of this sudden and great change in my aunt's affairs. As I might have expected, he had none at all. (My aunt, on the other hand, was in a compressed frame of mind, which was a lesson to all of us.)

I soon came to the conclusion that the first step I ought to take was to try if my articles could be recalled and the premium recovered.

I arrived at the office very early and sat down in my shady corner, looking up at the sunlight on the opposite chimney pots, and thinking about Dora, until Mr. Spewlow came in crisp and curly.

"How are you, Copperfield?" said he. "Fine morning!"

"Beautiful morning, sir," said I. "Could I say a word to you before you go into court?"

"By all means," said he. "Come into my room."

I followed him into his room, and he began putting on his gown, and touching himself up before a little glass he had, looking inside a closet door.

"I am sorry to say," said I, "that I have some rather disagreeing intelligence from my aunt."

"Not," said he. "'Dear me!' Not particularly, I hope?"

"It has no reference to her health, sir," I replied. "She has met with some large losses. In fact, she has very little left, indeed."

"You astounded me, Copperfield!" cried Mr. Spewlow.

"I shock my head," indeed, sir," said I, "her affairs are so changed, that I wished to ask you whether it would be possible—at a sacrifice on our part of some portion of the premium, of course." I put in this, on the spur of the moment.

warned by the black expression of his face— to cancel my articles?"

(What it cost me to make this proposal, nobody knows.)

"To cancel your articles, Copperfield? Cancel? I am extremely sorry, Copperfield. It is not usual to cancel articles for any such reason. It is not a professional course of proceeding. It is not a convenient precedent at all."

I saw with sufficient clearness that the recovery of my aunt's thousand pounds was out of the question. In a state of despondency, which I remember with anything but satisfaction, I left the office, and went homeward.

I was trying to famouse my head with the worst, and to present to myself the arrangements we should have to make for the future in their sternest aspect, when a hackney-chariot, coming after me, and stopping at my very feet, detained me to look up.

"Agnes!" I joyfully exclaimed. "Oh, my dear Agnes, of all people in the world, what a pleasure to see you!"

"Is it, indeed?" she said, in her cordial voice.

The day being very fine, she was glad to get out of the chariot. I dismissed the coachman, and she took my arm, (and I took her arm, to me.)

My aunt had written to her that she had fallen into ill-health, and was leaving Dover for good. Agnes had come to London to see my aunt, between whom and herself there had been a mutual liking these many years; indeed, it dated from the time when she was a child, and she had been at her house. She was not alone, she said. Her papa was with her—and Mr. Heep.

And now they are partners, said I, contending him?"

Yes, said Agnes. They have some business here; and I took advantage of their coming, to come too. You must not think my visit all friendly and disinterested. Trotwood,

for—I am afraid I may be cruelly prejudiced—I do not like to let papa go away alone with him.

"Is he the same old man as Mr. Wood still, Agnes?"

Agnes shook her head. "There is such a change at home," said she, "that you would scarcely know the dear old house. They live with us now."

"They?" said I.

Mr. Heap and his mother. He sleeps in your old room, said Agnes.

We found my aunt in a state of some excitement. She told us that her father-in-law was now in the neighbourhood, and that the knowledge of Agnes's father's "man of business."

Dear Agnes, I told her that was the history? said Agnes.

"I hope so," said my aunt.

Agnes told us that her father-in-law was now in the neighbourhood, and that the knowledge of Agnes's father's "man of business."

"Is that all?" repeated my aunt. "Why, yes, that's all except—And she lived happily ever afterwards."

✓ "I say, aunt, I interpose, that I must do so."

"I have been to make Trotwood," said Agnes, "that if you had time—"

"I have a good deal of time, Agnes. I am always disengaged after four or five o'clock, and I have time early in the morning."

Agnes said, "Doctor Strong has acted on his intention of retiring, and has come to live in London, and he has asked papa to go with him. I am a doctor. Don't you think he would rather have his favourite old pupil near him, than anybody else?"

"Dear Agnes!" said I. "What should I do without you! You are always my good angel. I tell you so. I never think of you in any other light."

I sat down and wrote a letter to the Doctor stating my object and appointing to call on him next day at ten of the forenoon.

A knock now came at the door.

"I think," said Agnes, turning pale, "it's papa. He promised me that he would come."

I opened the door and admitted not only Mr. Wickfield, but also Ursh Heep. I had not seen Mr. Wickfield for some time. I was prepared for a great change in him after what I had heard from Agnes, but his appearance shocked me.

There was an unwelcome reddening upon his face, his eyes were fixed and bloodshot, and there was a nervous trembling in his hand.

Agnes softly said to him, "Papa! Here is Miss Trotwood and Trotwood, whom you have not seen for a long while!" and then he approached and cordially gave my aunt his hand and shook hands more cordially with me. As I now looked at Ursh Heep, I was startled to see him, of himself, into a most ill-favoured countenance. As he saw me, too, I think, he shrank from him.

"Ursh Heep is a great relief to me," said Mr. Wickfield, in a dull voice. "It's a bad off my hand, Trotwood, to have such a partner."

(The red fox needed to say all this. I knew. What struck me most was, that with the evidence of his native superiority still upon him, he should submit himself to that crawling impersonation of meanness Ursh Heep.)

Heep had an engagement and parted from us. Mr. Wickfield left to Agnes, soon became more like his former self, though there was a settled depression upon him which he never shook off.

## CHAPTER XV

Dr Strong gladly appointed me his Secretary. His only regret was that he could not pay me more than £70 a year.

I was pretty busy now, up at five in the morning, and home at nine or ten at night. But I had infinite satisfaction in being so closely engaged, and never waked slowly on any account, and felt enthusiastically that the more I tired myself the more I was doing to deserve Dr—

Burning with impatience to do something more, I went to see Traddles.

Many men, I had heard, had begun life as reporters to newspapers, and I asked him how I could qualify myself for the pursuit of reporting the debates in Parliament. Traddles now informed me that a perfect and entire command of the mystery of short-hand writing and reading was about equal in difficulty to the mastery of six languages, and that it might perhaps be attained by dint of perseverance in the course of a few years.

"I am very much obliged to you, my dear Traddles," said I. "I'll begin to-morrow."

"Dear me," said Traddles, "I had no idea you were such

We were invited once again to Mr. Micawber's lodgings, and were glad to find this time that Mr. Micawber had got rid of his dust and ashes, and that something really had turned up at last.

He was arranging to leave for Canterbury, and said, "My dear Copperfield, I have entered into arrangements by virtue of which I stand pledged and contracted to our friend Heep, to assist and serve him in the capacity of—and to be his confidential clerk."

I stared at Mr. Micawber, who greatly enjoyed my surprise.

"Of my friend Heep," continued Mr. Micawber, "who is a man of extraordinary talents, and who is now

... *actual* ...  
 ... *condition* ...  
 ... the value of my services and on the value  
 of these services I put my faith."

What I particularly request Mr. Micawber to be careful of, as said Mrs. Micawber (that he does not, my dear Mr. Copperfield, in applying himself to this subordinate branch of the law place it out of his power to rise ultimately, to the top of the tree.")

My dear, observed Mr. Micawber, but glancing inquisitively at Traddles too, "we have time enough before us, for the consideration of those questions."

... that you do not look forward far enough (You are bound, as justice to your family if not to yourself, to take in at a comprehensive glance the extremest point in the horizon to which your abilities may lead you.)

Mr. Micawber coughed, and drank his punch with an air of exulting satisfaction—still glancing, at Traddles, as if he desired to have his opinion.

I did not show my resolution, with respect to the Parliamentary Debates, to cool. I bought an approved scheme of the noble art and mystery of stenography (which cost me ten and sixpence), and plunged into a sea of perplexity that brought

My struggles might have been quite heart-breaking, but for Dora, who was the stay and anchor of my tempest-driven bark. In three or four months, however, I was in a condition to make an experiment on one of our crack speakers in the Commons.

One day, when I went to the Commons as usual, I found Mr. Spenshaw in the doorway, looking extremely grave, and talking to himself.

Instead of returning my good-morning with his usual civility, he looked at me in a distant, reproachful manner, and coldly requested me to accompany him to a certain office-house which had a door opening into the chamber. I complied in a very uncomfortable state, and my mind suggested me that he had found out about my darling Dora.

If I had not passed there on the way to the office-house, I could hardly have failed to know what the matter was when I went up into my upstairs room, and found Miss Murdstone there.

"Have the goodness to show Mr. Copperfield," said Mr. Spewlow, "what you have in your reticule, Miss Murdstone."

I believe it was the old identical steel casket of my childhood, that shut up like a book. Compressing her lips in sympathy with the snap, Miss Murdstone opened it and produced my last letter to Dora, to read with expression of devoted affection.

"I believe that is your writing, Mr. Copperfield," said Mr. Spewlow.

I was very hot, and the voice I heard was very unlike mine when I said, "It is, sir!"

"If I am not mistaken," said Mr. Spewlow, as Miss Murdstone brought a parcel of letters out of her reticule, tied round with the dearest bit of blue ribbon, "these are also from your pen, Mr. Copperfield?"

I took them from her with a most delicate sensation.

"No, thank you!" said Mr. Spewlow, coldly, as I mechanically offered them back to him. "I will not deprive you of them. Miss Murdstone, be so good as to proceed!"

She narrated how she had snatched my last letter from Jip who was playing with it, and obtained the packet subsequently from Dora who was tired with having many more letters in her possession. Mr. Spewlow told me that the correspondence must come to an end; or he would disinherit Dora. He gave me a week to think over the matter.

When I got to the office and sat at my desk, in my own particular nook, thinking of this earthquake that had taken place so unexpectedly, and in the bitterness of my spirit cursing Jip, I fell into such a state of torment about Dora, that I wonder I did not take up my hat and rush instantly to Norwood. The idea of their frightening her, and making her cry, and of my not being there to comfort her, was so exciting, that it impelled me to write a wild letter to Mr Spewlow, begging him not to visit upon her the consequences of my awful destiny. This letter I sealed and laid upon his desk before he returned, and when he came in, I saw him, through the half-opened door of his room, take it up and read it.

He said nothing about it all the morning, but before he went away in the afternoon, he called me in, and told me that he believed he was an indulgent father (as indeed he was), and I might spare myself any solicitude on Dora's account.

## CHAPTER XVI

An unexpected calamity now befalls Dora. Mr Spewlow dies suddenly while driving home from town. She is overwhelmed with grief and goes to live with her two aunts—Miss Lavina and Miss Charissa—maternal sisters of Mr Spewlow. They refuse to recognise that Dora and I are positively engaged, but agree to let me visit her twice a week.

(Once again, let me pause upon a memorable period of my life.)

I have come legally to man's estate. I have attained the majority of twenty-one.

(I have tamed that savage stenographic mystery. I make it readable to the eye, and am permitted to contribute to reporting the debates in Parliament for a morning newspaper.)

I have taken with fear and trembling to authorship. I wrote a little something, in secret, and sent it to a magazine,

and it was published in the magazine. Now I am regularly paid for my articles. Altogether I am well off.

We have removed to a pleasant little cottage. My aunt, however (who has sold the house at 10, or so to good advantage), is still more than a stage case at hand. What does this portend? My marriage? Yes!

Yes! I am going to be married to Dora! Miss Lavina and Miss Chubb have given their consent. So they arrive at the house of Dora's aunts in due course, and Fradlees presents her, with great pride to us as well as to Agnes, whom I have brought from the Canterbury coach. Agnes has a great liking for Fradlees, and it is capital to see them meet. I fetch my aunt from her tiny cottage. We drive to the church in an open coach. The rest is all a mere or ~~as the~~ <sup>disconcerted</sup> dream—a dream of their coming in with Dora, of our kneeling down together side by side, of Dora's tracing my face and form, of the service being got through quickly and gravely, of my walking so proudly and lovingly down the aisle with my sweet wife upon my arm.

The honeymoon being over, I found myself sitting down in my own small house with Dora. But we felt our inexperience of house-keeping, and had our little quarrels. Whenever I had unknowingly wounded Dora's soft little heart, she was so pathetic in her sobbing and bewailing that I felt miserable. But my little wife was in such affliction when she thought that I was annoyed, and in such a state of joy when she found that I was not, that my misery quickly vanished.

"These are early days, Trot," my aunt once observed, "and Rome was not built in a day, nor in a year. You have chosen freely for yourself—a cloud passed over her face for a moment, I thought—and you have chosen a very pretty and a very affectionate creature. It will be your duty, and it will be your pleasure too, to estimate her (as you chose her) by

the qualities she has and not by the qualities she may not have. The latter you must develop in her if you can.

"I am very sorry. Dora once said. Will you try to teach me, Doady?"

"I must teach myself first. Dora said. I am as bad as you."

"Ah! But you can learn," she returned. "and you are a clever, clever man!"

"Nonsense!" said I.

"I wish," resumed my wife after a long pause, "that I could have gone down into the country for a whole year and lived with Agnes!"

"Why so?" I asked.

"I think she might have improved me," said I, "and I think I might have learned from her," said Dora.

"All in good time."

"Will you call me a name I want you to call me," inquired Dora without moving.

"What is it," I asked with a start.

"It's a stupid name," she said, shaking her head for a moment. "Child-wife."

(Thus it was that I took upon myself the task and care of our life, and had no partner in them.) We lived much as before, in reference to our surrounding household arrangements, but I had got used to them, and Dora, I was pleased to see, was seldom vexed now. She was bright and cheerful in the old childish way, loved me dearly, and was happy with her old trilles. I had no suspicion then that her health was failing. ✓

## CHAPTER XVII

I receive one morning a letter, dated Canterbury, from Mr Micawber, in which he asked me for an interview near the

Keep French press. I read the letter over several times. Making due allowance for Mr. Micawber's little style of composition, and for the extraordinary rash with which he sat down and wrote his letters on all possible and impossible occasions, I still believed that something important lay hidden at the bottom of his somewhat loose composition. My impression was confirmed when I consulted Traddles who had received a letter from Mrs. Micawber containing of a sort of mental notation from which her husband had been suffering of late. We therefore agreed to see him punctually at the appointed place.

"Oh, you are in low spirits, Mr. Micawber," said Traddles, when we met him.

"I am so," interposed Mr. Micawber.

"I hope," said Traddles, "it is not because you have received a bill due to the law—for I am a lawyer myself, you know."

Mr. Micawber answered not a word.

"How is our friend Hector Mr. Micawber?" said I after a silence.

My dear Copperfield, returned Mr. Micawber, bursting into a sort of violent excitement, and turning pale. "You will allow me, (as a private individual, to discuss a subject which has been brought to the utmost verge of legislation in my professional capacity.)

Take care," continued Mr. Micawber impatiently, "down a turning for upon my soul in my present state of mind I am not equal to this!"

We walked on arm in arm and went to my aunt's house rather than to mine because of Dora's illness. Miss Trotwood presented herself on being sent for and welcomed Mr. Micawber with gracious cordiality. Mr. Micawber kissed her hand and retired to the window.

Madam said Mr Micawber after a few minutes. I wish I had had the honour of knowing you at an earlier period. I was not a waste the week you at present belong to.

'I hope Mrs Micawber and your family are well, sir,' said my aunt.

Mr Micawber inclined his head. 'They are as well as usual,' he despatchedly observed after a pause. 'as usual and Outcasts can ever hope to be.

'Lord bless you, sir,' exclaimed my aunt in her abrupt way. 'What are you talking about?'

'The assistance of my family, ma'am,' returned Mr Micawber, 'figures in the balance. My country—'

Here Mr Micawber pronounced to be left off.

Mr Micawber said I—what is the matter? Please speak out. You are aiming first is—'

'Among friends, sir,' returned Mr Micawber and all the had reserved came breaking out of him. 'Good heavens! it is precisely because I am among friends that I—some of mind is what it is. (What is the matter gentlemen? What is not the matter? What is the matter, business is the matter, decoration is the matter, the matter, and the name of the whole affair is murder. Here!')

My aunt clapped her hands and we all started up as if we were possessed.

I never saw a man so hot in my life. I tried to calm him that we might come to something reasonable, but he got hotter and hotter and wouldn't hear a word.

'I'll put my hand in no man's hand,' said Mr Micawber, reaping, plucking and sothing to that degree that he was like a man fighting with a water. 'until I have—blown to fragments—the—serpent—Here! (I'll partake of no one's hospitality until I have—moved Mount Vesuvius—to eruption on the island of the—Here!')

With the last repetition of the magic word that had kept him going at all, Mr Micawber rushed out of the house; leaving

in a state of excitement, hope and wonder that reduced me to a condition little better than his own. Immediately after a note was brought to me in which Mr. Micawber requested us all to meet him at his old hotel in Canterbury, where he proposed to expose the misdeeds of Heep. Accordingly we four, that is to say my aunt, Mr. Dick, Traddles and I, went down to Canterbury, and Mr. Micawber appeared at the hotel when we had sat down to breakfast.

"Now sit," said my aunt to Mr. Micawber, as she put on her gloves, "we are ready for Mr. Micawber or anything else as soon as you please."

Madam," retorted Mr. Micawber, "I trust you will shortly witness an eruption. Mr. Traddles, I have your permission, I believe, to mention here that we have been in communication together?"

It is undoubtedly the fact," said Traddles, to whom I looked in surprise.

"Mr. Copperfield," continued Mr. Micawber, "I would beg to be allowed a start of five minutes by the clock, and then to receive the present company, inquiring for Miss Wickfield at the office of Wicket and Heep, whose Stupidity I am."

And so he said.

With this to my infinite surprise he nodded us all in a comprehensive bow, and disappeared.

When the time expired, we all went out together to the old house.

We found Mr. Micawber at his desk, in the turret office on the ground floor, either writing, or pretending to write, hard. The large office-ruler was stuck into his waistcoat.

"Is Miss Wickfield at home?" said I.

"Mr. Wickfield is unwell in bed, on account of a rheumatic fever," he returned, "but Miss Wickfield, I have no doubt, will be happy to see old friends. Will you walk in, sir?"

He nodded us to the dining-room. The last room I had

opened in that house—and flinging open the door of Mr. Wickfield's former office said in a soft voice

"Miss Trotwood, Mr. David Copperfield, Mr. Thomas Traddles, and Mr. Dixon!"

Uriah was astonished to see us. "Well, I am sure," he said, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure!"

A new wave of interest ran through Mr. Micawber. In the meanwhile, some slight talk passed between Mr. Micawber and Traddles, and Traddles, unobserved except by me, went out.

"Don't wait, Micawber," said Uriah.

Mr. Micawber, with his hand upon the handle of the door, stood erect before the door, most attentively looking at one of his fellow-men, and that man, his employer.

"What are you waiting for?" said Uriah. "Micawber! did you hear me tell you not to wait?"

"Yes!" replied the unknown Mr. Micawber.

"Then why do you wait?" said Uriah.

"Because I am short-changed," cried Mr. Micawber with a burst.

Uriah's cheeks lost color, and an <sup>unhealthy</sup> greenish pallor, still faintly tinged by his previous redness, spread them.

"You are a disappointed fellow, as all the world knows," he said, with an effort at a smile. "and I am afraid you'd better come to get rid of your complaint. I can see you're really—"

"If there is a secret on this earth," said Mr. Micawber, suddenly breaking out again with the utmost violence, "with which I have already taken too much trouble to discover, it is a secret—Hark!"

Uriah looked as if he had been struck or stung. Looking slowly round upon us with the darkest and wickedest expression that his face could wear, he said, in a hoarse voice

"Oh! This is a conspiracy! You have met here by appointment! Now, take care. You know nothing of this. Miss Trotwood, you had better stop this. Miss Wickfield, if you have any more to say, I'll be glad to hear it."

quell. I'll read him if you do. Now, come (I have got some of you under the harrow) Think twice, you Micawber, if you don't want to be crushed. Where's mother? he said. "Haul her out of the house, and put her down the back stairs. Fine doings in a person's own house!"

"Mrs. Heap is here, sir," said Traddles, returning with that worthy mother of a worthy son. "I have taken the liberty of making myself known to her."

"Who are you, or make yourself known?" retorted Uriah. "And what do you want to do?"

"I am the agent and friend of Mr. Wickfield, sir, and Traddles, in a supposed business-like way." And I have a power of attorney from him in my pocket to act for him in all matters."

(The old man has drunk himself into a stage of delirium, and Uriah, turning uglier than before, and it has been got from him by fraud!)

"Something has been got from him by fraud, I know," retorted Traddles quietly, "and so do you, Mr. Heap. We will leave that question, if you please, to Mr. Micawber."

"Try—," Mrs. Heap began, with an anxious gesture.

"You had your tongue in there," he retorted, "last time I asked you."

"But, my Try—"

"Will you hold your tongue, mother, and leave it to me."

Mr. Micawber, whose impetuosity I had restrained thus far with the greatest difficulty, now burst forward, drew the ruler from his breast (apparently as a defensive weapon), and produced from his pocket a folio document folded in the form of a large letter. Opening this packet, with his old flourish, and glancing at the contents, as if in cherished artistic admiration of their style of composition, he began to read as follows—

"Dear Miss Trotwood and gentlemen,



My charges against—Heep are as follows.

First. When Mr W's faculties and memory for the time being were weakened, he obtained Mr W's signature under such circumstances to documents of importance, representing them to be other documents of no importance. He induced Mr W to empower him to draw out, there, one paper or more of trust-deeds, amounting to two or six fourteen two and one, and employed it to make pretended business changes and deductions which were either already provided for, or had never really existed."

"Ury, Ury! Be unble, and make terms, my dear!" screamed Mrs. Heep.

"Mother!" Heep retorted, "will you keep quiet? You're in a fright and don't know what you say or mean. Unble!" he repeated, looking at me, with a snarl. "I've unbled some of 'em for pretty long time back, unble as I was!"

Mr Micawber, gently adjusting his chair in his cravat, presently proceeded with his composition.

"Second. Heep has, on several occasions to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, secretly and illegally forged, to various entries, books and documents, the signature of Mr W—and has distinctly done so in one instance, copious of proof by me."

"Ury, Ury! cried the mother. "be unble and make terms. I know my son will be unble gentlemen, if you'll give him time to think. Mr Copperfield, I'm sure you know that he was always a very unble, sir!"

Mr Micawber continued.

"Third. And last. Mr W has been for years deluded and persuaded in every conceivable manner, to the pecuniary spoliation of the estate of his father and grandfather—Heep. His last act, completed but a few months since, was to induce Mr W to execute a real assignment of his share in the partnership, and even a bill of sale on the very furniture of his

house, in consideration of a certain anxiety to be well and truly paid by—HARR

I have now concluded. It remains for me to substantiate these assertions and then, with my ill-starred family, to disappear from the land upon which we appear to be an incumbrance.

Remaining always, &c. &c.,

WILKINS MICAWBER

Much affected and most deeply enjoying myself, Mr. Micawber folded up his letter, and handed it with a bow to my aunt, as something she might like to keep.

There was a lock fastened on my first visit long ago, an iron safe in the room. The key was in it. A little suspicion occurred to me, Uriah, and with a glance at Mr. Micawber, he went to it and threw the door open. It was empty!

"Where is the money?" he said with a frightful face. "None! I have lost the key!"

Mr. Micawber turned himself with the elder. "I did, when I got the key from you as usual—but a little earlier—and opened it this morning."

"Don't be uneasy about that," they have come into my possession. I will take care of them under the authority I mentioned."

"You receive nothing more, do you?" cried Uriah.

Under such circumstances answered Traillor, "yes."

What was my astonishment when I beheld my aunt, who had been profound in quiet and attentive, make a dart at Uriah Hoop, and seize him by the collar with both hands!

"You know what I want?" said my aunt.

"A strait-waistcoat," said he.

"No," my aunt replied, "I want my coat." "Ay, yes, my dear, as long as I have, it had been really made away with."



as he had been told of his name. He said, "Mother told your name. Well! let em have that deed. Go and fetch it!"

She soon returned not only with the deed, but also with the box in which it was, where we found a banker's book and some other papers that were afterwards serviceable.

"Good!" said Trotter, when this was brought. "Now, Mr. Heep, you can retire to think."

Mr. Micawber's work was finished, and he returned home, followed by Mr. Lark, my aunt and myself. We were all very grateful for what he had done. As this meant the loss of his appointment under Heep, our hearts were filled with sympathy for his family. My aunt now suggested that he should migrate to Australia to try his luck.

Capital, madam, capital, urged Mr. Micawber gloomily.

"That is the principle, I may say the only authority," my dear Mr. Copperfield, answered his wife.

"Capital," cried my aunt. "But you are doing us a great service—have done us a great service. I may say, for sure, much will come out of the fire—and what can I we do for you that would be half so good as to lend the capital?"

"I could not receive it as a gift," said Mr. Micawber, full of fire and animation, "but if a sufficient sum could be advanced, say at five per cent interest per annum upon my personal liability—say my notes of hand, at twelve, eighteen, and twenty-four months respectively, to allow time for something to turn up——"

"Could he?" "Can he and shall he on your own terms," returned my aunt, "if you say the word."

"There is but one question, my dear woman. I could wish to ask," said Mrs. Micawber. "The climate. I believe is healthy?"

"Finest in the world!" said my aunt.

"Just so," returned Mrs. Mowbray. "Then my question arises (Now, are the circumstances of the country such, that a man of Mr. Mowbray's abilities would have a fair chance of rising in the social scale?) I will not say at present might he aspire to be Governor, or anything of that sort, (but would there be a reasonable opening for his talents to develop themselves—that would be amply sufficient—and find their own expansion?)"

"No better opening anywhere," said my aunt, "for a man who conducts himself well and is industrious."

"For a man who conducts himself well," repeated Mrs. Mowbray with her clearest business manner, "and is industrious. Precisely. It is evident to me that Australia is the legitimate sphere of action for Mr. Mowbray."

"I entertain the conviction, my dear madam," said Mr. Mowbray, "that it is under existing circumstances the land, the only land, for myself and family and that something of an extraordinary nature will turn up in that sphere."

This conviction gradually gained ground and Mr. Mowbray prepared to sail for Australia with his family at the earliest opportunity.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Soon after this Dora's illness grew serious and I returned to London. Gradually I discovered that I could not remain in the country with her. I tried to. But I could not shut out a distressing shadow of relief that she might be spared. At last they told me everything and I knew that Dora would soon leave me. At her earnest desire I sent for Agnes with whom she spent her last moments. It was from Agnes that I learnt that I was to go with her.

It came to think that the Future was walled up before me, that the energy and action of my life were at an end, that I

never could find any refuge but in the grave) I was to go abroad. That seemed to have been determined among us from the first on the advice of Agnes whose spirit pervaded all we thought. I waited only for what Mr Micawber called the final pulverisation of Heep, and for the departure of the emigrants for Australia. Soon we came to Canterbury to meet Traddles.

Wick was held in safe keeping by Traddles and later by Dick, where an investigation into his fraudulent transactions proceeded. Mr Micawber greatly helped Traddles in examining the financial condition of Mr Wickfield which was really chaotic.

"Now let me see," said Traddles, looking among the papers one day. "Having counted our funds, and reduced to order a great mass of unintentional confusion in the first place and of wilful confusion and falsification in the second, we take it to be clear that Mr Wickfield might now wind up his business, and his agency trust and exhibit no deficiency or defalcation whatever."

"Oh thank Heaven!" cried Agnes fervently.

"But," said Traddles, "the surplus that would be left as his means of support—and I suppose the house to be sold, even in saying this—would be so small, not exceeding in all probability some hundreds of pounds, that perhaps, Miss Wickfield, it would be best to consider whether he might not retain his agency of the estate to which he has so long been receiver."

"I have considered it, Trotwood," said Agnes, looking to me "and I feel that it ought not to be, and must not be. I have always aspired, if I could have released him from the toils in which he was held to render back some little portion of the love and care I owe him and to devote my life to him. It has been for years, the utmost height of my hopes. To take our future on myself will be the next great happiness—the next to his release from all trust and responsibility—that I can know."

"Have you thought how Agnes?" I said.

"Often! I am not afraid, dear Trotwood. I am certain of success. So many people know me here and think kindly of me, that I am certain. Don't mistrust me. Our wants are not many. If I rent the dear old house, and keep a school, I shall be useful and happy."

"Next, Miss Trotwood!" said Traddles. "That property of yours."

Well, sir, sighed my aunt. (Al I have got to say about it is that if it's gone, I can bear it, and if it's not gone, I shall be glad to get it back.)

"It was originally, I think, eight thousand pounds, Consoles?" said Traddles.

"Right!" replied my aunt.

"I can't account for more than five," said Traddles, with an air of perplexity.

"—thousand, do you mean?" inquired my aunt, with uncommon composure. "or pounds?"

"Five thousand pounds," said Traddles.

"It was all there was," returned my aunt. "I sold three, myself. One I paid for your articles, Trot, my dear, and the other two I have by me."

"Then I am delighted to say," cried Traddles, beaming with joy, "that we have recovered the whole money!"

"How so, sir?" exclaimed my aunt.

"You believed it had been misappropriated by Mr. Wickfield?" said Traddles.

"Of course I did," said my aunt, and was therefore easily silenced."

"And indeed," said Traddles, "it was sold, by virtue of the power of management he held from you, but I needn't say by whom sold, or on whose actual signature. It was afterwards pretended to Mr. Wickfield by that rascal,—and proved, too, by figures, that he had possessed himself of the

money (on general instructions, he said to keep other deficiencies and difficulties from the light."

"Had" said my aunt, knitting her brows thoughtfully, and glancing at Agnes. "And what's become of him?"

"I don't know. He left here," said Traddles, "with his mother, who had been clamouring, and lecturing, and discomfiting, the whole time. They went away by one of the London night coaches, and I know no more about him."

"Do you suppose he has any money, Traddles?" I asked.

"Oh dear, yes, I should think so," he replied, shaking his head, seriously. "I should say he must have pocketed a good deal in one way or other. But I think you would find, Copperfield, if you had an opportunity of observing his course, that money would never keep that man out of mischief."

Soon after the Micawbers' departure for Australia, I left England, and for many months travelled with an ever darkening cloud upon my mind. Sometimes, I proceeded restlessly from place to place, stopping nowhere; sometimes, I lingered long in one spot. I had no purpose, no sustaining soul within me, anywhere.

I was now in a valley in Switzerland. I had come out of Italy, over one of the great passes of the Alps, and had since wandered with a guide among the byways of the mountains. If those awful altitudes had spoken to my heart, I did not know it. I had found sublimity and wonder in the dread heights and precipices, in the roaring torrents, and the wastes of ice and snow, but as yet, they had taught me nothing else.

One evening I opened a packet of letters which had been awaiting me for some time, and read the writing of Agnes. She was happy and useful, and was prospering as she had hoped.

She gave me no advice, she urged no duty on me, she only told me, in her own fervent manner, what her trust in me was. She knew, (she said,) how such a nature as mine would turn affliction to good.

I read her letter many times. I wrote to her before I slept. I told her that I had been in a real need of her help, that without her I was not what I never had been, what she thought me.

I resolved to remain away from home for some time longer, to settle myself for the present in Switzerland, to resume my pen; to work.

I worked early and late, patiently and hard. I wrote a story with a purpose growing not remotely out of my experience, and sent it to Traddles. He arranged for its publication very advantageously for me, and the tidings of my growing reputation began to reach me from travellers whom I encountered by chance. After some rest and change, I felt to work in my old robust way on a new fancy which took strong possession of me. As I advanced in the execution of this task, I thought of returning home.

## CHAPTER XIX

I arrived in London, on a winter afternoon evening. It was dark and raining, and I saw more fog and mud in a minute than I had seen in a year.

For some changes in the fortunes of my friends, I was prepared. My aunt had long been re-established at Dover, and Traddles had begun to get into some little practice at the Bar, in the very first term after my departure. He had chambers in Gray's Inn, now.

"Good God!" cried Traddles, looking up as I stepped into his room. "It's Copperfield!" and rushed into my arms, where I held him tight.

"All well, my dear Traddles?"

"All well, my dear dear Copperfield, and nothing but good news!"

We cried with pleasure both of us.

"To think," said Traddles, "that you should have been so long hanging here, as you must have been my dear old boy, and not at the ceremony!"

"What ceremony, my dear Traddles?"

"Why my dear Copperfield," said Traddles, standing before him upright with both hands, and then putting his hands on my knees, "I am married!"

"Married!" I cried joyfully.

"And bless me," said Traddles, "by the Rev. Hiram's Nephew down in Devonshire. Why my dear boy, show behind the window curtain. Look here!"

To my surprise at the dearest girl in the world, and at that same instant, looking on her face from her place of concealment.

"It was a scene I could not repeat, and on with pleasure for a long time after I left. Traddles' happiness often led me to think so much of the vicissitudes and separations that had marked my life. The memory of my miserable childhood was one day unexpectedly revived.

Mr. Chulip, the Doctor who attended my mother in her first confinement, had left Blunderstone six or seven years ago, and I had never seen him since. I now met him one day placidly perusing the newspaper in a London coffee-room with his little head on one side and a glass of warm cherry negus at his elbow.

I walked up to where he was sitting and said, "How do you do, Mr. Chulip?"

"Dear me, sir!" said Mr. Chulip, surveying me with his head on one side. "And it's Mr. Copperfield is it? Well, sir, I think I should have known you, if I had taken the liberty of looking more closely at you."

"I was aware that you sustained a bereavement, sir, some time ago," continued Mr. Chulip. "I heard it from your father-in-law's sister. Very decided character there, sir?"

Why, yes, said I, decidedly enough. Where did you see her, Mr. Chillip?"

Are you not aware, sir, returned Mr. Chillip, with his placidest smile, that your father-in-law is again a neighbour of mine?"

"No," said I.

He is indeed, sir, said Mr. Chillip. Married, a young lady of that part with a very good little property, poor thing."

I was aware of her being married again. Do you attend the family?" I asked.

Not regularly. I have been called in," he replied.

Strong phrenic organ, development of the organ of firmness, in Mr. Murdstone and his sister, sir.

And the brother and sister are pursuing their old course, are they?" said I.

I must say they are very severe, sir, both as to this life and the next."

The next will be regulated without much reference to them, I dare say, I returned, what are they doing as to this?"

Mr. Chillip shook his head, started his nose, and wiped it.

She was a charming woman, sir, he observed in a plaintive manner.

The present Mrs. Murdstone?

A charming woman indeed, sir, said Mr. Chillip, "as amiable, I am sure, as it was possible to be! Mrs. Chillip's opinion is that her spirit has been entirely broken since her marriage, and that she is all but melancholy mad. And the ladies, observed Mr. Chillip, timorously, "are great observers, sir."

I suppose she was to be subdued and broken to their detestable mood. Heaven help her! said I. "And she has been."

Well sir there were violent quarrels at first I assure you said Mr Chulip. But she is quite a shadow now. Would it be considered forward if I was to say to you, sir, in confidence, that since the sister came to help the brother and sister between them have nearly reduced her to a state of Imbecility?"

I told him I could easily believe it.

I have no hesitation in saying, said Mr Chulip, fortifying himself with another sip of negus, between you and me, sir, that her mother died of it—or that tyranny, gloom and worry have made Mrs Murdstone nearly imbecile. She was a lively young woman sir before marriage, and their gloom and austerity destroyed her. They go about with her now more like her keepers than her husband and sister-in-law. That was Mrs Chulip's remark to me, only last week. And I assure you sir the ladies are great observers. Mrs Chulip he proceeded in the calmest and slowest manner quite electrified me by pointing out that Mr Murdstone sets up an image of himself and calls it the Divine Nature. Mr Murdstone delivers public addresses sometimes, and it is said—in short, sir, it is said by Mrs Chulip—that the darker tyrant he has lately been the more ferocious is his doctrine.

I believe Mrs Chulip to be perfectly right," said I.

Mrs Chulip does go so far as to say," pursued the meekest of little men much encouraged, "that what such people miss all their reason as a vent for their bad humours and arrogance."

I left for Dover next morning. My aunt and I, when we were left alone, talked far into the night. She told me how the emigrants never wrote home, otherwise than cheerfully and hopefully, and how Mr Meaworth had lately remitted diverse small sums of money, on account of those "pecuniary liabilities," in reference to which he had been so business-like as between man and man.

And when Trot said my aunt, patting the back of my hand as we sat in our old way, before the fire, "when are you going over to Canterbury?"

"I shall get a horse and ride over to-morrow morning," said my aunt, "and go with me."

"No!" said my aunt in her short abrupt way. "I mean to stay where I am."

"Then, I should ride," I said.

I rode away early in the morning for the scene of my old school days.

The well-trodden road was soon traversed, and I came into the city. It is where every stone was a key a book to me. I went on first to the old house, and requested the new maid who admitted me, to tell Miss Wakefield that a gentleman who waited on her from a friend abroad, was there, and I was shown up the grave old staircase into the unchanged drawing room. Everything was as it used to be in the happy time.

The opening of the little door made me start and turn. Her beautiful serene eyes met mine as she came towards me. She stopped and laid her hand upon her bosom.

"Agnes! my dear girl!" I have come too suddenly upon you.

"No, no!" I am so rejoiced to see you, Trotwood!"

"Dear Agnes, the happiness it is to me, to see you once again!"

She was so true, she was so beautiful, she was so good,—I owed her so much gratitude, she was so dear to me, that I could find no utterance for what I felt. I tried to bless her, tried to thank her, tried to tell her (as I had often done in letters, what an influence she had upon me, but all my efforts were in vain. My love and joy were dumb.

"And you, Agnes," I said, by-and-by. "Tell me of yourself. You have hardly ever told me of your own life, in all this lapse of time."

"What should I tell?" she answered with her radiant

stone. Papa is well. You see us here quiet in our own home, our anxieties set at rest, our home restored to us, and knowing that our Truwood can know all.

Agnes had to leave me for a while in order to attend to her duties at the school she had been keeping.

Soon I met Mr. Wickfield who had come home from a garden he had out of town where he now employed himself almost every day. He seemed but the shadow of his handsome picture in the wall. As I rode back in the lone night, the wind going by me like a restless memory, I feared Agnes was not happy. And I was not happy.

## CHAPTER XX

I have a letter from old Creakle here, and I one day to Traddles in his London house.

From Creakle the schoolmaster? exclaimed Traddles. "No!"

Among the persons who were attracted to me in my rising fame and fortune," said I, looking over my letters, "and who discover that they were always much attracted to me, is the self-same Creakle. He is not a schoolmaster now, Traddles. He is retired. He is a Municipal Magistrate.

I thought Traddles might be surprised to hear it, but he was not so at all.

I continued, "He writes to me here, that he will be glad to show me in operation the only true system of prison discipline, the only unchallengeable way of making sincere and lasting converts and penitents, which, you know, is by solitary confinement. What do you say?"

To the system? inquired Traddles looking grave.

No. To my accepting the offer and your going with me?"

I don't object," said Traddles.

"Then I'll write to say so. You remember our treatment at his hands?"

"Perfectly," said Traddles.

Yet, if you'd read his letter, you'd find he is the tenderest of men to prisoners convicted of the whole calendar of felonies," said I, (though I can't find that his tenderness extends to any other class of created beings.)

We arranged the time of our visit, and I wrote accordingly to Mr. Creakle that evening.

On the appointed day Traddles and I repaired to the prison where Mr. Creakle was powerful. It was an immense and solid building erected at a vast expense. In the office we were introduced to an old schoolmaster who was one of a group composed of two or three of the best sort of magistrates and some visitors they had brought.

He received me like a man who had formed my mind in twelve years, and had never seen me before. On my introducing Traddles Mr. Creakle expressed in his manner, but in an inferior degree, that he had never seen Traddles a good philosopher and friend. Our venerable visitor was a great soul, old and not improved in appearance. His face was as fiery as ever.

After some conversation among these gentlemen from which I might have supposed that there was nothing in the world to be legitimately taken into account but the supreme comfort of prisoners at any expense, and nothing on the wide earth to be done outside prison here we began our inspection. It being then just dinner time we went first into the great kitchen, where every prisoner's dinner was on a course of being set out separately, to be handed to him in his cell, with the regularity and precision of clock work. I learned that the system required high living.

As we were going through some of the magnificent passages I inquired of Mr. Creakle and his friends what were supposed to be the main advantages of this adorning and universally

overriding system? I found them to be the perfect isolation of prisoners so that no one man in confinement there, knew anything about another and the reduction of prisoners to a wholesome state of mind, leading to sincere contrition and repentance.

I found a vast amount of profession, varying very little in character varying very little (which I thought exceedingly suspicious even in words. Above all, I found that the most professing men were the greatest objects of interest, and that their conceit, their vanity, their want of excitement, and their love of deception (which many of them possessed to an almost incredible extent, as their histories showed) all prompted these professions and were all gratified by them.

However I heard so repeatedly, in the course of our rambles to and fro, of a certain Number Twenty Seven who was the favourite, and who really appeared to be a Model Prisoner, that I resolved to suspend my judgment until I should see Twenty Seven. I heard so much of Twenty Seven, of his pious admonitions to everybody around him and of the beautiful letters he constantly wrote to his mother (when he seemed to consider in a very bad way) that I became quite impatient to see him.

I had to restrain my impatience for some time on account of Twenty Seven being reserved for a commanding effect. But at last we came to the door of his cell and Mr Creakle looking through a little hole in it reported to us, in a state of the greatest admiration, that he was reading a Hymn Book.

There was such a rust of heads immediately, to see Number Twenty Seven reading his Hymn Book that the little hole was blocked up, six or seven heads deep. To remedy this inconvenience, and give us an opportunity of conversing with Twenty Seven in all his purity, Mr Creakle directed the door of the cell to be unlocked, and Twenty Seven to be invited out into the passage. This was done and whom should Traddles and I then behold to our amazement in his converted Number Twenty Seven but URAN HEEP!

He knew us directly; and said, as he came out—with the old writhe,—

"How do you do, Mr. Copperfield? How do you do, Mr. Fraddles?"

This recognition caused a general admiration in the party. I rather thought that every one was struck by his not being proud, and taking notice of us.

"Well, Twenty Seven," said Mr. Creakle, mournfully admiring him. "How do you find yourself to-day?"

"I am very umble, sir!" replied Uriah Heep.

"You are always so, Twenty Seven," said Mr. Creakle.

Here, another gentleman asked, with extreme anxiety, "Are you quite comfortable?"

"Yes, I thank you, sir!" said Uriah Heep, looking in that direction. "Far more comfortable here, than ever I was outside. I see my follies now, sir. That's what makes me comfortable."

Several gentlemen were much affected; and a third questioner, forcing himself to the front, inquired with extreme feeling, "How do you find the beef?"

"Thank you, sir," replied Uriah, glancing in the new direction of this voice, "it was tougher yesterday than I could wish; but it's my duty to bear. I have committed follies, gentlemen," said Uriah, looking round with a meek smile, "and I ought to bear the consequences without repining."

"You are quite changed?" said Mr. Creakle.

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" cried this hopeful penitent.

"You wouldn't relapse, if you were going out?" asked somebody else.

"Oh de-ar no, sir!"

"Well!" said Mr. Creakle, "this is very gratifying. You have addressed Mr. Copperfield, Twenty Seven. Do you wish to say anything further to him?"

"You knew me a long time before I came here and was changed, Mr. Copperfield," said Uriah, looking at me; and a

*face*

more villanous look I never saw, even on his visage. "You knew me when, in spite of my follies, I was umble among them—that was proud, and meek among them that was violent—you was violent to me yourself, Mr. Copperfield. Once, you struck me a blow in the face, you know." *and so*

General commiseration. Several indignant glances directed at me?

"But I forgive you, Mr. Copperfield," said Uriah, making his forgiving nature the subject of a most impious and awful parallel, which I shall not record. "I forgive everybody. It would ill become me to bear malice. I freely forgive you, and I hope you'll curb your passions in future. I hope Mr. W. will repent, and Miss W. and all of that sinful lot. You've been visited with affliction, and I hope it may do you good; but you'd better have come here. Mr. W. had better have come here, and Miss W. too. The best wish I could give you, Mr. Copperfield, and give all of you gentlemen, is, that you could be look up and brought here. When I think of my past follies, and my present state, I am sure it would be best for you. I pity all who ain't brought here!"

He sneaked back into his cell, amidst a little chorus of approbation; and both Traddles and I experienced a great relief when he was locked in.

"Do you know," said I to a Warder as we walked along the passage, "what felony was Number Twenty Seven's last folly?"

The answer was that it was a Bank case.

"A fraud on the Bank of England?" I asked.

"Yes, sir. Fraud, forgery, and conspiracy. He and some others. He set the others on. It was a deep plot for a large sum. Sentence, transportation for life."

## CHAPTER XXI

I took up my abode in my aunt's house at Dover, and occasionally went to London to consult Traddles on business

matters. He had managed for me, in my absence, with the soundest judgment; and my worldly affairs were prospering.

I had been at home about two months. I had seen Agnes frequently.

It was a cold harsh winter day when I rode to Canterbury this time. I found Agnes alone. Having welcomed me as usual, she took her work-basket and sat in one of the old-fashioned windows.

I sat beside her on the window-seat. As I looked at her beautiful face, observant of her work, she raised her mild clear eyes, and saw that I was looking at her.

"You are thoughtful to-day, Trotwood!"

"Agnes, shall I tell you what about? I came to tell you."

She put aside her work, as she used to do when we were seriously discussing anything; and gave me her whole attention.

"My dear Agnes, do you doubt my being true to you?"

"No!" she answered, with a look of astonishment.

"Agnes! Ever my guide and best support! If you had been more mindful of yourself, and less of me, when we grew up here together, I think my heedless fancy never would have wandered from you. When I loved Dora—fondly, Agnes, as you know——"

"Yes!" she cried, earnestly. "I am glad to know it!"

"When I loved her—even then, my love would have been incomplete, without your sympathy. I had it, and it was perfected. And when I lost her, Agnes, what should I have been without you, still! I went away, dear Agnes, loving you. I stayed away, loving you. I returned home, loving you!"

And now, I tried to tell her of the struggle I had had, and the conclusion I had come to. I also tried to lay my mind before her, truly and entirely. If she did so love me (I said) that she could take me for her husband, she could do so, on no deserving of mine, except upon the truth of my love for her.

"I am so blest, Trotwood—my heart is so overcharged—but there is one thing I must say."

"Dearest, what?"

She laid her gentle hands upon my shoulders, and looked calmly in my face.

"Do you know, yet, what it is?"

"I am afraid to speculate on what it is. Tell me, my dear."

"I have loved you all my life!"

We were married within a fortnight. Traddles and Sophy, and Doctor and Mrs. Strong, were the only guests at our quiet wedding. We left them full of joy, and drove away together.

"Dearest husband!" said Agnes. "Now that I may call you by that name, I have one thing more to tell you."

"Let me hear it."

"It grows out of the night when Dora died. She sent you for me."

"She did."

"She told me that she left me something. Can you think what it was?"

I believed I could.

"She told me that she made a last request to me, and left me a last charge."

"And it was——"

"That only I would occupy this vacant place."

And Agnes wept; and I wept with her, though we were so happy.